IDEAS AND FORMS IN ENGLISH AND AMERICAN LITERATURE

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IDEAS AND FORMS
IN ENGLISH AND AMERICAN LITERATURE

VOLUME I—POETRY

BY

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PREFACE

For several years the editors of this work have been associated in teaching English literature to college students. The course which to them presented the greatest difficulty was the Introduction to Literature required of students who did not intend to make a special study of English, and who took, therefore, only the required general course. For such students the historical survey method, with its emphasis upon sources, developments, and periods, seemed ill-adapted. The average student who does not specialize in literature is less interested in its history than he is in its meaning, content, and forms. The editors believe he will profit most by a course which does not elevate to the first place historical details, reserving for that preeminence stress on the meaning and value of what he reads. His permanent gain from the course should be an understanding of literature, a love for it, and an abiding desire to continue to read the best after his instructor has ceased to prod him.

For such a course the most satisfactory textbook is naturally a whole library. Students in very small classes may be depended upon to use the college reading-room in preparing their assignments, or may be urged to buy books freely. Ordinarily, however, the classes in required introductory courses are large, and the students' purchasing power is sharply limited; under such conditions the use of a textbook containing an adequate body of material is imperative. The present work is the result of the editors' desire to provide a satisfactory textbook for such classes as have been described. A brief explanation of the theory and plan of the anthology will make their objective clearer.

The title of the work, *Ideas and Forms in English and American Literature*, sums up the principles which have guided the editors in the selection of their material; their emphasis is upon content and type and not upon historical development. Selection and arrangement in an anthology which is designed for use in a course in the historical development of literature naturally follow a chronological plan throughout, and such a work possesses, in the mere arrangement by dates, a clear articulation. On the other hand, the editors of a text which is designed primarily to present the substance of literature and to illustrate its dominant forms must seek some other scheme, some logical plan in addition to the chronological order; otherwise the result will be a *collection* rather than a *selection* of specimens and will provide only a literary garret, among the odds and ends of which the student will wander confused and discouraged. In the present work the editors have had in mind, throughout, the dominant ideas and the prevailing moods in literature as these have manifested themselves in various predominating types or forms.

Whether, with Arnold Bennett, literature is defined as *life*, or, with Matthew Arnold, as *criticism of life*, makes no great difference; literature is the artistic interpretation of life, in all its manifestations, through the instrumentality of language. Sometimes the literary artist represents life as it is, or as he thinks it is; sometimes he represents it ideally, as he thinks it should be. But through the current of literature run all the elements of life, all the ideas, moods, and motives of man; and every reader tries more or less consciously to relate his reading to his own knowledge, feeling, and experience. In making their selections, accordingly, the editors have been guided in part by those dominant ideas and moods which seem to belong to every period and to manifest themselves in every literary type. The text has been designed to show how, for example, the universal subjects of youth and age, life and

death, beauty and decay, and the various other conceptions, interests, and emotions of mankind run current through all literature, subject to whatever modifications the time-spirit may decree. These universal subjects appear in epic and ballad, lyric, short story, drama, and other forms which serve to contain and preserve the writers' interpretations of life. The extent to which the editors have been guided by a consideration of theme and mood will appear from an examination of the headnotes and footnotes, the index, and the topics for study, discussion, and report.

The considerations of content and mood which have helped to guide the editors in making their selections have resulted further in the inclusion of modern as well as older literature. Literature should be thought of as a stream which flows out of the past down to our very feet. The conception of some students, therefore, that great literature is only of the present and that of some teachers that it is entirely of the past are equally fallacious. Both old and new appear together in this work, and every dominant type of literature that is still employed as a literary form is illustrated by selections that have stood the test of time and by new ones that promise to be of permanent value. The relative proportions of old and new vary, of course, in the different divisions; the editors' inclination has been, however, to include modern and current literature freely, and every chapter, except the epic and the medieval romance, contains abundant examples of life as living writers are interpreting it.

In one particular the editors have made a deliberate restriction; they have included only English and American literature. The following considerations led to this decision. Some types of literature, as for example, lyric and narrative poetry, cannot be adequately exhibited in translations; even prose forms such as the essay and short story lose much of their spirit and flavor when transferred to another tongue. Moreover, there is no subject or mood and no dominant type which cannot be illustrated satisfactorily in English and American examples. Little of importance is to be lost, therefore, by the restriction, and much is to be gained, on the other hand, by the focus of attention upon the literature of one race. The only point at which the restriction created some misgivings in the minds of the editors was in the early narrative forms; the exclusion of the Homeric epics and of the European continental romances seemed unusual. In the epic chapter the difficulty was met by including one of the great Celtic sagas. The deliberate introduction here and elsewhere in the work, of Celtic side by side with English and American literature is, the editors believe, unique in books of this type but entirely justifiable. There is really no reason why the Celtic spirit, which has contributed so much to literature in the English tongue, should have been so long unrecognized in college classes in literature.

Classification and arrangement have been by literary types rather than by ideas and moods, since such classification is simpler and results in a better integration of the material. It is believed that, with the exception of the novel, all dominant forms are represented. The novel was omitted because of the impossibility of illustrating the type except by totally inadequate excerpts. Certain other forms, such as the oration and the letter, were omitted partly because the editors do not regard them as dominant types and partly that space might be saved for the fuller development of more important sections. Satire, since it appears in all types, is not itself a form of literature. The drama could not here be fully illustrated; the three one-act plays given are complete, however, and serve to show one direction which current playwrighting has taken. With few exceptions, the selections included are complete; where any cuts have been made, the omissions have been carefully indicated. Among the types there is, of course, some overlapping. For example, it is difficult to decide whether to put a narrative poem with a strongly lyric tone

or a lyric poem with a narrative basis among the narrative poems or among the lyric poems. Similarly a biographical essay is both biography and essay. Literary craftsmen are seldom particular to follow the strict definition of the type, and in modern literature, particularly, type distinctions have tended to break down or run together. On the whole, however, it is believed that the classifications have been clearly made and will be found useful.

A separate chapter has been devoted to each major type, and these divisions have been arranged in an order determined partly by historical development and partly by logical relationships. Thus Chapters I-V are devoted to poetry while Chapters VI-X are devoted to prose. Epic poetry, as the oldest type, appears in the first chapter, and the chapters which treat other forms of narrative poetry follow immediately. Similarly, in the second part of the text the short story comes at the end because it is the newest of literary types. Within each chapter the arrangement of selections is chronological; this seemed the natural and logical arrangement, inasmuch as literature is largely evolutionary in development, and a consideration of the content and forms of one period oftens throws much light upon those of a later day. For this reason many of the chapters, such, for example, as those devoted to the ballad, the lyric, and the essay, are fairly adequate surveys of the evolution of these types in England and America. The space devoted to the lyric may seem excessive, but in no other type can the development of the ideas of the English people be so intimately and clearly traced, together with a corresponding development of literary form.

A word must be said about the apparatus which accompanies the selections. Each group of selections which illustrates a major type is preceded by an introductory essay that is intended to define the type, indicate its place in literature, and sketch its history briefly. This essay is meant to be suggestive rather than exhaustive, to stimulate rather than to satisfy curiosity. For a fuller study of the nature of the type the student may turn to the books listed in the bibliographies at the ends of the various chapters; these bibliographies list some of the most important volumes which define or illustrate the literary forms, but they are not meant to be complete. In the headnotes and in the footnotes to the different selections the editors have tried to be helpful to the student without at the same time making it unnecessary for him to refer to dictionaries and other helps with which he should become acquainted. In writing the notes, moreover, the editors have not forgotten that it is the instructor's privilege and duty to explain and interpret the material read, and they have been careful not to encroach upon the teacher's territory. Finally, topics for discussion and reports were included, because the editors believe that a thorough study of literature can be accomplished only when the students are forced to think independently and to make discoveries and draw conclusions for themselves. An effort has been made to present in these lists topics which are fresh in idea and which can be dealt with satisfactorily only by independent reading and study; those which tempt the student to seek for his material in critical sources and to express the opinions of others have usually been omitted. The lists of topics are necessarily brief; instructors will add others which may seem to them more fitting.

As has been said, it is not the wish of the editors to encroach upon the instructor's privileges of using this body of literary material in whatever manner he may see fit. However, for the guidance of those teachers who may wish to make a definite study-plan the following suggestions are offered.

In general, the Table of Contents may be used as an outline guide for the course. The material is divided into three parts of approximately equal length—(1) Narrative Poetry; (2) Lyric Poetry; (3) Prose. In a college year consisting of three terms, one term may be

conveniently devoted to each major division, with proportionate attention to each subdivision. Where the college year follows the usual two-semester plan, one semester may be given to poetry and the other to prose. In the first semester narrative poetry and lyric poetry should be given equal attention; in the second semester somewhat less than half of the class meetings may be devoted to a study of the essay, and the rest to the remaining prose forms. With classes meeting three times a week most of the selections may reasonably be assigned for reading; when the class meets only twice a week, the amount of reading should, of course, be correspondingly reduced. With any class, however, at least one meeting should be devoted to a definition of each type; such a definition may either precede or follow the reading of the selections representing the type. On the whole, it is better to assign comparatively few selections for a given class meeting; at no time should the assignment be so large as to tempt hasty and ill-digested cramming.

As it has been a part of the plan of the editors to emphasize in their selection of material the persistence of dominant ideas and moods, it is hoped that instructors and students using the book will carry this plan out by looking for common elements in the literature of different periods and types. The familiar subjects of English and American literature—men and women, individuals and society, nature and art, friendship and feud, love and hate, heroism, youth and age, life and death, and all the varying human moods—should be kept in mind so that at the conclusion of his course the student may carry away a conception of how English and American literature in all periods and forms has woven an artistic and variegated tapestry of life.

Specific acknowledgments to publishers, living authors, and others who have generously permitted the reprinting of copyrighted material have been made in the appropriate places in the book. Without these courtesies the editors would have found it impossible to demonstrate by their selections and comments that the current of English and American literature is still a full and living stream. To Professor Lindsay Todd Damon, Supervising Editor for Scott, Foresman and Company, the editors are deeply indebted for his thorough and penetrating, yet kindly, criticisms of the entire anthology.

H. A. W.
J. B. M.

NEW YORK CITY,
OCTOBER, 1925.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

In preparing the first edition of this text, the editors were forced by limitations of space to represent the drama by three one-act plays. They realized that such a representation of an important type of literature is inadequate, but the alternative was to omit the type altogether. The decision of the publishers to issue the book in the present two-volume edition has made it possible, however, to make up this deficiency by adding five full-length plays to the chapter on drama, thereby giving this literary type the fullness of representation which it deserves. The three one-act plays of the first edition have been retained. The original introductory essay on drama has been replaced by a much more complete one, and the drama bibliography and list of "topics" have been completely rewritten. In this new edition, therefore, the chapter on drama is as complete as is any of the other chapters.

In addition to this virtual replacement of the drama chapter, the editors have made the following changes. They have revised the introductory essays of some chapters, even to the extent—as in the chapters on history, biography, and prose fiction—of rewriting whole sections. They have corrected and improved many of the headnotes and footnotes. They have brought the bibliographies and necrologies down to date. This new two-volume edition represents, therefore, a re-editing of the entire text.

The division of the book into two volumes has made necessary certain mechanical changes. Each volume has been paged and indexed separately. The old cross-references of the first edition have been retained, but whenever a cross-reference in one volume is to a page in the other volume, the Roman numeral I or II, as the case may be, has been placed before the page number; where the reference is to a page in the same volume, however, the Roman numeral is not employed.

The publication of the book in two volumes should make easy the division of the course into a semester devoted to poetry and another to drama and prose. The two volumes contain more material than will probably be needed to define and illustrate the literary types represented; but the editors have had no idea that any student should be required to study carefully every specimen in the book.

NEW YORK CITY, H.A.W.
AUGUST 15, 1932 J.B.M.

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CHAPTER I

THE EPIC

AN INTRODUCTION

I. Why Poetry Developed Before Prose

The nature of poetry explains why it developed in literature earlier than prose, for its more persistent sense of rhythm makes it a better medium than prose for arousing or giving outlet to the emotions. Wherever we can trace the first stirrings of self-expression in a tribe or nation, even before writing was known, we find poetry employed to express or arouse the emotions of the group—as in songs of war or religious observance—and of the individual—as in incantations, and songs of love or hate. Youth, whether spoken of as a period in the life of an individual or of a group, is a time of emotional sensation and perception, rather than of philosophic reflection and criticism. As young people and young nations discover for themselves what the experiences of life mean, their first reaction is emotional. An important crisis of youth is usually preceded and followed by an emotional outburst. Songs of love may be followed, if the lover is successful, by the hymn of marriage, or if unsuccessful, by the lament. The tribal war song preceded the battle, and the returning warriors chanted either the song of victory or the lament of defeat. We may say, therefore, that the rhythm of poetry first enabled both the primitive social group and its individual members to give adequate expression to their emotional reactions.

We are likely to regard with awe, if not with actual reverence, whatever exercises a power over us which we can neither understand nor control. Consequently it is easy for us to perceive why early tribal bards and the songs which they sang were set apart as sacred possessions of the tribe. The emotion felt by warriors on hearing a bard sing a ballad of war was comparable to that which they experienced in battle, and under his spell they felt themselves capable of accomplishing unusual, perhaps superhuman, deeds of valor. His ability to play upon their emotions seemed uncanny, for besides war songs he knew charms against sickness and spells which brought misfortune upon one's enemies. Accordingly, when the mists of prehistoric times roll away, we see the bard already established in the hall of the tribal chief or king, and regarded as especially gifted of the gods.

Reverence for the singer is easily transferred to the song which survives him. As time passed, and the heroic traditions of a tribe were gathered in ballads or lays, and these were combined in popular epics, such poems came to be regarded with a reverence equal to that which was accorded to the bards; for no matter who sang them, they of themselves had power to arouse the emotions, to recall the past glories of the tribe, and to depict the ideals which the listening audience should emulate. To the reverence with which the lay and the popular epic were regarded we owe in great part their preservation.

The prior development of poetry over prose may also be explained by other circumstances in tribal life than reverence for that medium which provided so mysterious an emotional outlet. No matter how much one may wish to remember prose, it is scarcely possible to do so, for prose does not, as poetry does, assist the memory. Hence, if prose is to be preserved, it must invariably be set down in writing. On the other hand, the recurring rhythm of poetry stimulates the memory, and if rime or alliteration be added, the stimulus is increased. Of fundamental importance, too, is the lyric element, introducing, as it does in most forms of poetry which are intended to be sung, repetitions of words, lines, or entire stanzas. On the whole, poetry, because of

its technique, as described above, and its ability to arouse and sustain the imagination, imprints itself permanently upon the memory as prose does not. We may remember our general reactions to a prose composition, but prose usually employs more words to produce its effect than does poetry, and its lack of such poetic devices as marked rhythm, rime, and alliteration makes it impossible for the memory to retain the exact words in which the thought or emotion has been expressed. Consequently tribes which did not know writing could not retain in their memory either a story or an emotional impression, except through the medium of poetry.

The first volume of this text is devoted to tracing the development of the types of poetry and the dominant ideas which poetry has expressed in English and American literature. Because, in the main, narrative poetry developed first, we shall trace its growth to the present day before tracing that of lyric poetry. Narrative poetry, originally the expression of the group, became, in time, the expression of the individual. Though we do not know the author either of any popular English or Celtic epic or of any truly popular ballad, yet from medieval times on we know the author of a poem, and his point of view takes an increasingly important position in his work. But although we may perceive from the earliest records a general tendency to shift the emphasis of narrative poetry from the interest of the group to that of the individual, we must not suppose that in modern times narrative poetry about the group and for the group has been abandoned. Instead, both kinds advance together, with the emphasis at present upon the narrative of the individual. In like manner, while narrative poetry at first presented its story objectively from the point of view of the actors of the story, it has since tended, in one of two ways, to become more subjective: by introducing the emotional reaction of the author to the story, as Scott does in his narrative poems, or else by becoming at least imaginatively autobiographical, as in Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and Masefield's "The River." Hence we cannot say dogmatically that either the objective or the subjective attitude is typical of the narrative poet. We are accustomed to grant that in general the attitude of the lyric poet is chiefly subjective and individual; but at present the importance in society of the individual is such that the subjective attitude predominates in both narrative and lyric poetry. It is in no wise possible to assign such poems as Amy Lowell's "Patterns" and "No. 3 on the Docket," Hardy's *Satires of Circumstance*, and Masters' *Spoon River Anthology* definitely either to the narrative or to the lyric group. A recognition of this fact discloses a most interesting trend in the development of literature, for while until the time of the Renaissance the tendency of the Middle Ages was to build up separate literary types of thought and expression, since the Renaissance the tendency has been to tear down the distinctions of type both in poetry and prose. Even as lyric and narrative poetry tend to approach each other, so the essay and the short story encroach upon the domain of the novel, while history, biography, and the novel are constantly borrowing each other's methods. Yet throughout this development certain ideas and forms have proved dominant. It is our present purpose to trace their development in the realm of narrative poetry.

At the outset a word must be said about the place and function of meter in this general development. In narrative poetry the story is of primary interest, and the meter serves chiefly as its rhythmic vehicle, maintaining a subordinate position. Elaborations of metrical form did not invade the field of narrative poetry until long after they had become fully established in lyric poetry. The roughly accentual meter of the Anglo-Saxon epic, the heroic couplet in which Chaucer wrote a great part of *The Canterbury Tales*, and the iambic pentameter, or blank verse, of Milton's *Paradise Lost* are simple metrical forms, especially when compared with the elaborate lyric structures which appeared in lyric poetry as early as the time of Chaucer. We shall see that during the nineteenth century modern narrative poetry borrowed from lyric poetry considerable metrical subtlety, even as it borrowed from it substance, but the result was to decrease the length of the individual narrative poem, because the ear and the mind cannot retain elaborate verse forms over a long period. The

constantly apparent beauty of the meter of Spenser's *Faerie Queene* draws our attention away from the story, and the more successful of Scott's longer narrative poems employ either a rimed couplet or a relatively simple ballad stanza. Elaborate verse forms seem to be used successfully in modern narrative poetry only in such comparatively short poems as "The Eve of St. Agnes," by Keats.

Writers of long narrative poems subsequent to Scott have followed him, nearly always, in employing a simple meter, sometimes introducing lyric interludes, much as did the Celtic bards in their epics. What effect free verse will have upon narrative poetry we cannot yet determine. The principle of free verse is to secure an elasticity of rhythm and length of line which will harmonize with the emotion of the moment. The germ of free verse, perhaps, is inherent in the roughly accentual verse of the Anglo-Saxon epic. Certain of its characteristics appear in Coleridge's *Christabel.* But free verse and one of its ramifications, polyphonic prose, did not attract any considerable attention in the writing of narrative poetry until Amy Lowell published the two volumes *Men, Women and Ghosts* (1916) and *Can Grande's Castle* (1918). Whether free verse can develop a sufficiently marked rhythm to carry a long narrative, without ceasing to be free verse, time alone can tell. A simple strongly-marked meter has been almost universally the chosen medium for long narrative poems, but it is certain that the possibilities of free verse have been by no means exhausted. In meter, as in plot and in style, modern narrative poetry has shown a marked development, analogous to that of lyric poetry.

II. The Epic Tradition in England

The first type of narrative poetry which we shall consider is the epic, both in its *popular* and its *literary* development. By *popular epic* we mean an epic about which the following three statements are true: that it was handed down orally from bard to bard during the tribal age; that it is the work of no one poet; and that it represents a constant growth and alteration in form and subject-matter from age to age. By *literary epic* we mean an epic which was created by one author conscious of the epic tradition. Both kinds of epic have, however, the same fundamental characteristics, for the same general purpose inspired the bards who developed the popular epic and the poets who wrote literary epics. The epic may be defined in general as a narrative poem of considerable length, which depicts against a background of the past—and usually it is the heroic or mythical past—the deeds and adventures of heroic or supernatural beings, who represent, consciously or unconsciously, national or religious ideals. Story, characters, and technique are broad and sweeping in outline, although the literary epic has frequently adorned itself with spoils taken from a long literary heritage, and therefore has often become a highly conscious and intricate performance. A distinctive characteristic of both the popular and the literary epic is its reverent idealization of the past; because of this characteristic the epic became a shrine for those ideals which men believed once to have been on earth, and which they hoped might return.

The history of English epic poetry, both popular and literary, is very simple. Between the fourth and the eighth centuries a number of epics were composed by tribal bards. Of these epics, all the Anglo-Saxon examples have been lost except *Beowulf* and fragments of one or two others, while of the Celtic epics none has come down to us in a complete form. Possibly the Celtic bards never perfected an epic or passed beyond the ballad form of composition, though of this we cannot be sure. What are preserved from the Celtic tribal age are the prose retellings of epic sagas interspersed with fragments of verse. But even these prose retellings mirror adequately the epic spirit of the Celtic bards. At least two great cycles of the heroic age are represented in the prose adaptations, that of *The Deeds of Cuchulain*, and that of *The Deeds of Finn*. Around them are grouped many other stories which have only the most tenuous connection with the fate of the central hero, though they plainly belong to the epic age.

After the eleventh century the growth of feudalism, as a result of the Norman invasion, put an end to the conditions favorable to the composition of the popular

epic, and though long narrative poems were written and recited at the courts of the feudal lords, they no longer dealt with epic material, but with that which is associated with medieval romance and the ideals of chivalry. They were called romances, and are a separate type of narrative poetry.

At the end of the Middle Ages, with the coming of the Renaissance, one might expect that the rise of national ideals in England under the Tudors would have led some of the Elizabethan poets to compose a literary epic which should mirror the ideals and glories of the new nation, but such was not the case, for while many long narrative poems were written, they more nearly approached the medieval romance than the epic. Of these the best example is unquestionably Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. Another reason for the lack of epic poetry in this age may well have been the great interest in the drama.

In the seventeenth century the two epics of John Milton—*Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*—were in part by-products of the battle between Puritanism and the Established Church. Although Milton modeled his epics in form upon the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* of Homer and the *Aeneid* of Vergil, and although he had no acquaintance with *Beowulf* or the *Cuchulain Saga*, the ideals characteristic of both the Anglo-Saxon and the Celtic epics play a considerable part in *Paradise Lost*.

The eighteenth century, the so-called Age of Reason, was not conducive to the production of either the popular or the literary epic. The national ideals of England were not vigorously or ideally expressed either through its royal family or its peaceful constitutional monarchy. The nearest approach we can find to the epic lies in Pope's mock-heroic *The Rape of the Lock*, which employs all the majestic machinery of the epic for the narration of a social bagatelle.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution led to a new era in England, which is known in history as the rise of the British Empire, and in literature as the Romantic Revival. This period would seem to have been propitious for some poet to body forth the new ideal of life through the medium of the literary epic. However, the poets of this period were in the main subjective individualists, who preferred the lyric or the short narrative poem as a medium for expression. During the nineteenth century, although Sir Walter Scott in his narrative poems approached somewhat the spirit of the epic, his interest in the medieval traditions of Scottish chivalry led him to imitate the medieval romance rather than the epic. In the Victorian Age, Tennyson, in the *Idylls of the King*, took a subject which had epic possibilities, but he treated it as a spiritualized romance of chivalry. No matter what may be the literary excellences of the *Idylls of the King*, and they are many, they do not include such a vigorous presentation of national ideals as do the Anglo-Saxon and Celtic epics or *Paradise Lost*. At the end of the century William Morris, like Sir Walter Scott, recaptured some of the spirit of the epic in his long narrative poems, but his interest in the story was for its own sake, without any sense of an ethical or national mission. As he said in the prologue to *The Earthly Paradise*, he was the "idle singer of an empty day."

In the twentieth century, with the exception of *Drake* by Alfred Noyes, no conscious literary epic poetry of consequence has been written. In fact, after the Norman Conquest, with its substitution of Norman French for Anglo-Saxon as a literary language, the English people lost that sense of literary continuity with the Anglo-Saxons which would have been helpful in cherishing the composition of epic poetry. During the Renaissance the use of classical models did not arouse in the English a desire for national epics of their own, and when in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries they refound the forgotten Anglo-Saxon and Celtic epic material, the literary atmosphere of the time was not propitious to the epic spirit. Although the deeds of Englishmen at this time would have furnished admirable material for an epic glorification of the British Empire, sufficient time had not elapsed to place this period in the epic past. Moreover, the spirit of the nineteenth century had developed in poets an interest in personal reactions rather than the reactions of a group. Perhaps the World War and the new realm which science has opened to us will revive

the epic spirit in our descendants, but at present English epic poetry presents the picture of a vigorous stream which started between high banks in Anglo-Saxon times, but which eventually broadened its course, diversified its channels, and dispersed the united energy of its current, until it was partly merged in the general river of poetic endeavor, and whose presence may now be traced through many shifting narrative forms, rather than in the single epic form from which it started.

III. Anglo-Saxon and Celtic Ideals of the Tribal Age

As our attention in this book is to be concentrated upon the literature of the English and American peoples, it is necessary for us to consider briefly the ideals peculiar to both the Anglo-Saxon and the Celtic tribes who first voiced them in the popular epic. The Anglo-Saxon of the age in which the popular epic developed was, above all things, tenacious of purpose, self-contained, of excellent moral stamina, and expectant of little from life except the hardest kind of battle. Life to him was more or less of a mystery, to be faced fearlessly, but without any hope of compassion or quarter from the natural or supernatural forces opposed to him. Though he often had emotional reactions about these forces, the Anglo-Saxon, unlike the Celt, rarely let his emotions or longings befog the clearness of his vision. Above all he prized his sense of fact, which tempered the blindness of over-confidence and pride, a blindness fatal, in his opinion, to a successful life. Throughout Anglo-Saxon poetry there breathes, too, a sense of family and of tribal solidarity, and a loyalty to the tribal chieftain who was the tangible representative of the spiritual ideals of good government and justice. In the Anglo-Saxon epic one is constantly aware of the existence of that profound interest in a code of ethics and in political government which has always been characteristic of the English people.

The Celtic tribes had a happier and more radiant view of life, akin to the naïve wonder of children at nature. Though they were like the Anglo-Saxons in their awe of Fate, their eyes and their hearts reflected the joy they felt for the beautiful in nature and in life. While the humor of the Anglo-Saxon is grim, ironic, and mature, that of the Celt is simple, charming, and childlike in its appreciation of the beautiful and amusing things which the current of life brings to every man. In like manner, though the Celts share with the Anglo-Saxons a sense of the mystery of life, it does not fill them with foreboding. They feel both an ineffable and tender melancholy at the transitory and illusive nature of beauty, and an eager joy that so much beauty has been vouchsafed. That a mighty warrior should die young is a tragedy, but to the Celtic bard the tragedy is not the only consideration. He takes into account the beauty of the young man's life while he was yet at the height of his power, and the inscrutability of those unknown forces which swept him away out of this world into one which the bard felt, and all his people with him, must be even more beautiful than the one he left. The epic bards of the Celtic tribes believed in general that our world is only an imperfect fragment of a greater and more beautiful world of eternal youth, where those who have honorably performed their part in this world will find a solution for the mysteries of life, and dwell in eternal happiness.

The persistence of Anglo-Saxon and Celtic ideals in our literature is remarkable, when we take into account the influence of the ideals of feudalism and chivalry which were introduced into England by the Norman Conquest, and the influence of the Renaissance with its insistence upon the excellence of the classics. Although the form of every literary epic written by an English poet has shown the influence of Vergil, yet the ideals expressed by the story and the characters have been persistently like those found in the popular epics of the Anglo-Saxons and Celts. In Milton's *Paradise Lost* the grim determination of Satan to fight regardless of the outcome, his tragic despair, and his ever-present yearning for beauty and happiness find their counterparts in *Beowulf* and in the *Cuchulain Saga*. We shall see throughout the development of epic poetry in English literature the persistence of a certain attitude toward life which we can identify as distinctly British, no matter what modifications the form may undergo.

IV. The Characteristics of the Anglo-Saxon and the Celtic Popular Epics

The conditions of life under which the Anglo-Saxon and Celtic popular epics arose were so different from those to which we are accustomed that it is best to glance at them before examining the characteristics of the popular epic.

Between the fourth and the seventh centuries of the Christian era the shores of Scandinavia, Denmark, and Holland were inhabitated by bands of warriors who grouped themselves together under tribal chieftains, and spent much of their lives in raids upon neighboring communities. Their living conditions were relatively primitive. Each tribal chieftain lived in a large hall, gabled and raftered, which fulfilled the triple purpose of being his throne-room, the dormitory and feasting-hall of his warriors, and the stronghold of the tribe. Near it stood other buildings which served respectively as storerooms, stables, and dormitories for the married men and for the women. The whole group of buildings was surrounded by a wooden stockade. The usual location for these strongholds was an elevated plain far enough from the harbor to prevent a surprise attack by raiders who swept in on their ships from the sea, yet not too far for the warriors to have easy access to their own ships. The life of the Anglo-Saxon warrior seems to have been a vigorous one, filled with dangers and hardships. His duty was to stand by his leader at all times, whether in peace or in war, either at home or on raiding expeditions, where he fought as one of the warrior-band or as a separate champion. His reward came in the shape of protection, maintenance, and gifts from his chieftain. The gifts—usually in the form of weapons, armor, horses, rings, and costly jewels—were distributed at the evening feast in the great hall of the king. A less tangible reward, but one not the less prized, was to have the valor of the warrior compared with that of the tribal heroes of old by the bard, or "scôp" as the Anglo-Saxons called him, who composed and sang ballads either about the deeds of ancient heroes or about the recent deeds of the warriors of his own tribe. All of these ballads were sung, not merely for the purpose of recalling the past or of recording a recent event, but of inciting the warriors to emulate the deeds of their ancestors.

The Celts of this period had similar tribal organizations and ideals, but the more stable conditions of living in Ireland made their outlook on life far brighter than that of the Anglo-Saxons. The Celts were an agricultural and cattle-raising people, whose dwelling places were fixed from one generation to another, unless some tribal feud led to the annihilation of a tribe and the destruction of its fortress. The daily occupations of the Celts in time of peace were less hazardous than those of the Anglo-Saxons, who passed their time upon the ocean or in the forest. Consequently the Celt looked upon nature as beautiful and friendly, while the Anglo-Saxon looked upon it as awful and remorseless. The ideals of the Celt had their source partly in man and partly in nature, but as the Anglo-Saxon could not count on nature as an ally, he idealized man and regarded nature as the force which he must combat.

The importance of the blood-feud in both Anglo-Saxon and Celtic epic tradition must not be forgotten. Intrigues to become chieftain, wars to the death between tribes, can nearly always be traced to a deadly feud between blood relatives or relatives by marriage. *Beowulf* contains many of them, while the tragedy of *Deirdre* is caused by the struggle of an uncle and his nephews for the possession of the most beautiful woman in Ireland. The same tendency is apparent both in medieval romance—where Mordred is King Arthur's illegitimate son, and Tristram is the nephew of King Mark—and in the ballads, as we shall see in "Edward."

It was in such general surroundings that the popular epic developed. Its audience was a group of warriors whose way of life the bard idealized. They were not an acute literary audience in the modern sense, as poetry to them was but one of the inspirations and rewards of a life of war. Since they were simple, vigorous men, they demanded simple, vigorous poetry. Moreover, they never read epic poems, but heard them at the banquet, sung or recited to the accompaniment of the harp, for the epic age did not know writing. Many passages

both in *Beowulf* and *Deirdre* explain the conditions under which the epic recital took place. The verse employed in *Beowulf* is rough, alliterative, accentual verse, without any rime. The line breaks in the middle, and there are two main stresses in each half-line, as for example:

> Hwæt, we Gâr-Déna in geárdágum,
> þéodcýninga, þrým gefrúnon,
> hu ðа æþelíngas éllen frémedon! [1]

The alliteration may rest upon vowels independent of consonants, as in the second half of the second line, and exhibits many varieties and modulations. After the Norman Conquest this type of verse disappeared, to be replaced by the rimed verse of the French. English poetry, however, has never lost completely the rich sound of Anglo-Saxon alliteration, as anyone may notice who reads aloud with this in mind such passages as the opening chant of the three witches in *Macbeth*, or Tennyson's lyric "Tears, Idle Tears, I Know Not What They Mean," or who recalls the felicity of the word order of the Celt, as revealed in the plays and poems of Synge and Yeats.

More than any other fact, the oral nature of epic poetry determined its literary characteristics. The story must be simple, vivid, and rapid, if the audience was to understand and retain an interest in it. The plot could not be elaborate, for to remember intricate details would be too much of a strain upon the memory of the listener. The interest was in the thing done rather than in the subtle causes and emotions which preceded and followed it.

Since the memory of the bard was the storehouse of all his epic lays, it is easy to see how the versions would differ from bard to bard, or even from recitation to recitation. The same incident, therefore, might be related differently at each court by each bard. However, by the end of the epic period certain incidents about certain heroes had proved themselves to be much more popular than others, and had accordingly been worked out into a fairly definite poetic form. We do not know surely, but we believe that the process of epic composition was a gradual fusion into one epic whole of several ballads about a particular hero. For example, in the English and Scottish ballads we have several which have been partially and imperfectly joined into a long narrative poem called the *Gest of Robin Hood*; but this is not an epic, partly because of the lack of fusion between the constituent poems of which it is composed. The *Cuchulain Saga*, which represents the popular epic in the making, is likewise made up of many prose accounts of several incidents in the life of Cuchulain. *Beowulf*, which is a fully developed popular epic, consists of at least four incidents—the battle with Grendel, the battle with Grendel's mother, Beowulf's return home, and the battle with the dragon—each one of which could very well originally have been the subject of a heroic ballad. All that we know of the popular epic suggests to us a constant growth accomplished by no one man, but by a great number of epic bards who devoted their lives to such work.

In style we may distinguish several characteristics of the Anglo-Saxon and the Celtic popular epic. Since the poet carried his songs in his memory, and since his audience retained the impression of these songs solely in their memory, many mnemonic aids were employed. Among these, repetition of word, phrase, or entire incident is quite common. When Beowulf is about to speak, the poet warns the reader by some such line as "Beowulf spake, the son of Ecgtheow." All good warriors are usually described in similar terms as "the valiant one," "the renowned one," "the man glorious in victory," while the distinguishing title of the individual is usually his patronymic or father's name, as we see in the example given above. Sometimes we wonder how the audience could keep from being bored, when the epic poet, after relating a given incident, such as Beowulf's battle with Grendel, would cause his hero later to retell that incident, as Beowulf does when he returns home. Yet such was the interest of the warriors in a story that they were apparently glad to hear a number of versions of the same incident, especially since there were apt to be significant differences in the versions, as there are in the incident from *Beowulf* to which we have referred.

On the other hand, the epic poet did not continually use repetition of epithet.

1. þ and ð are the Anglo-Saxon *th*.

To introduce variety, he employed a series of nicknames to describe the various incidents in a warrior's life or his war equipment. These nicknames, or "kennings" as the Anglo-Saxons called them, are chiefly metaphoric. In the Anglo-Saxon epics, for example, the ocean is spoken of as "the tumult of the waves," "the sea-road," and "the bath of the sea-gull." A ship is "a bird," "a swan," "the foamy-necked floater," "the sea-wood," and "the ring-necked one." When not overworked, these kennings stimulate the imagination profoundly, but they became so far-fetched in later Anglo-Saxon poetry as to obscure the meaning.

Similes and metaphors have been known as the chief and most characteristic verbal adornment of epic poetry, and although they are not so well represented in the Anglo-Saxon and Celtic epic material as in Latin and Greek, yet there are sufficient examples to enable us to see how the epic poet gained vividness of presentation by their use. In the Anglo-Saxon epic, similes and metaphors are not employed as much as parallel stories from the lives of heroes other than the hero of the poem. For example, the exploit of Beowulf in killing Grendel is compared with that of Siegmund and the dragon. Indeed, the self-repression of the Anglo-Saxon and his general understatement of facts are evidenced in *Beowulf* by the very undeveloped nature of the similes. Times of battle or misfortune are spoken of as "the day when the eagle and wolf will call to each other as they gorge their fill upon corpses," and the fortune which awaits the faithless warrior is spoken of in terms of "the gallows tree." On the other hand, the Celts, with their ardent love of nature and their vivid perception of beauty, drew striking word pictures from the simplest natural phenomena. Nowhere is this more beautifully exemplified than in the lament of Deirdre over the death of the three sons of Usnach. In general, we may say that while neither the Anglo-Saxon nor the Celtic bard developed the use of poetic simile and metaphor as fully as did Homer, yet the germ is there, expressed naturally and as an integral part of the word picture, and both races of bards were keenly alive to the poetic value of graphic imagery.

Among the characteristics of the Anglo-Saxon and the Celtic popular epic the use of under-statement and irony to express foreboding and human suffering is notable. To the fortitude of the Anglo-Saxon, understatement was natural. Thus in *Beowulf*, after Grendel has made his first raid upon the hall of Hrothgar, the poet remarks that those who survived felt that they could sleep more comfortably and with less fear of disturbance in another place. It is very easy to imagine the epic audience of grim warriors smiling at each other after such a remark. Now, strange as it may seem, though the Celts were much more given to exaggeration than were the Anglo-Saxons, yet their tender sense of emotion generally prevented them from overdoing an emotional crisis. Deirdre's laments are lavish in length, but they are tender, delicate, and restrained in their beauty. In both Anglo-Saxon and Celtic popular epic poetry there is always reserved power of expression. As for irony, it seems to have been inherent in both Anglo-Saxon and Celt, coupled with a sense of foreboding as to the issues of human experience. Life is strange and inexplicable, as Hrothgar explained to Beowulf when, after the hero had slain Grendel's mother, the aged ruler pondered on the fate of good and bad kings. In like fashion, Deirdre reflects upon the mystery of her love for Naoise, a love which is destined to be fatal to both of them. Both the Celtic and the Anglo-Saxon bard give many examples of their cardinal faith that "Fate always goes where it will," and we shall hear this call echoing through English literature, yet coupled with a desire to experience life to the full in an attempt to learn its wonders and solve its mysteries.

The circumstances which molded the poetic technique of the Anglo-Saxon and the Celtic epic controlled the characterization of their heroes. Beowulf, Deirdre, and Naoise all act under the guidance of some one governing emotional principle. They are not subtle in revealing their emotions; their actions and sentiments spring from a simple and primal ethical code. When Hrothgar laments for his councilor Aeschere, Beowulf replies, "Do not sorrow, aged ruler; it is better for a man to avenge his friend than to lament over-much"; and as he stands upon the shore, ready to dive into Grendel's

pool, utterly doubtful as to his return, his words of farewell are dominated completely by his feeling that all he has to do is to perform his duty, and Fate will govern the issue. As one listens to the story of these heroes, there arises inevitably in the mind the realization of an absolutely simple, courageous view of life, untrammeled by details, and unlimited by metaphysical questions. These warriors faced unafraid, though with awe, the realm in which their lives were spent, and left the rest to Fate. Their figures, therefore, tower immeasureably in the distant perspective of the epic, and assume proportions which more detailed and closely viewed characterizations would not give, for to a listening audience a multitude of details detracts from the unity of effect.

The reader who has been impressed by the vigorous simplicity of the epic warrior, whether Anglo-Saxon or Celtic, will be somewhat surprised at the long speeches in which he either relates with pride what he has done, or boasts of what he is going to do. These epic "brags," as they are called, are more characteristic of the Celt than of the Anglo-Saxon, though they appear frequently in *Beowulf*. It would seem to have been characteristic of the epic age that a warrior should seek constantly to remind himself of his former achievements and spur himself on to uphold the honor of his family, as well as that of his king, by expressing what his ideals had led him to perform in the past, and what he hoped to be able to do. The epic "brag" should not be looked upon as empty boasting, for if at the banquet, in the heat of the moment, a warrior should state what he intended to do, he would have plenty of friends to remind him of his boast, and expect him to perform it. The reader should consider the boasting speeches of the Anglo-Saxon and Celtic heroes as not uttered in the spirit of pure bravado, but either as a proud statement of former achievement or as a determination for future accomplishment.

We have left until last what is perhaps the chief distinguishing feature of popular Anglo-Saxon and Celtic epic poetry. When the lyric poet sings of love or hate, he normally does so in terms of his own experience. This attitude is called subjective. The poet of the early popular epic, however, is clearly objective, for he is relating, not his own experiences or emotions, but those of heroes who have long since passed from the scene of action. The poet of the early popular epic makes his audience see these heroes as once more alive, and keeps himself completely out of the picture. To some this objectivity might seem a loss in vividness, but such is not the fact, for the objectivity of the epic poet enables him to speak for his entire tribe or nation. While singing as the voice of the heroic past, he is not merely the hero of the song of the moment; he is every hero of the tribe, adjuring his countrymen to uphold with their lives the ideals of the warrior band. It is this quality which gives profound ethical and didactic significance to the popular epic poetry of the Anglo-Saxons and the Celts. In the last analysis Beowulf and Cuchulain are the progenitors of many a great English historical figure both in history and literature, for they represent not the ephemeral or personal interests of one or more of the bards, but the essential faith and hope of an entire people.

VI. The Characteristics of The English Literary Epic

The literary epic differs from the popular epic in that it is the production of one poet, who expresses his ideal conception in a literary form which is modeled upon preeminent examples of the epic, both literary and popular. Since English poets were generally ignorant of the existence of a body of Anglo-Saxon and Celtic popular epic material until the latter half of the eighteenth century, English literary epics have been modeled chiefly upon the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* of Homer and the *Aeneid* of Vergil. We now know enough about the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to believe them to be popular epics, and Homer a fictitious name used to cover the bardic group which developed these poems. The spirit of these two epics has been influential on subsequent European literary epics, although in form they have not had equal influence with the *Aeneid*, itself a literary epic. Vergil standardized the form of the literary epic, and his division into twelve books, his fundamental unity, his sense of reserved power, together with the exquisite finish of his speeches, descrip-

tions, and imagery, have been imitated widely by epic poets. The study of Vergil during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance produced an adulation of the *Aeneid* which was detrimental to the writers of literary epics. Vergil had borrowed largely from Homer, but he absorbed what he borrowed. His followers, however, borrowed, not merely from him, but from the literary storehouse of the ages, and in an attempt to imitate his mythological allusions they so weighted down their narrative that their stories often cease to move. In fact, by the eighteenth century the literary epic, which on the Continent formerly had had so significant a development at the hands of Ariosto and Tasso, was fast becoming a devitalized, learned tradition; and if it began to recover vitality in the nineteenth century, it was chiefly because of the reappearance of the popular epics of the Anglo-Saxons and the Celts, which placed the emphasis of the epic once more where it had originally rested—upon a story of the heroic or mythical past which embodied national or religious ideals.

While occasional English literary epics have been written, from *The Davideis* by Cowley to *Drake* by Noyes, *Paradise Lost* by Milton has alone evinced sufficient vitality to survive as a poem to be read. For in spite of Milton's tremendous erudition, his faith in the Puritan ideal was so great as to make that ideal dominate *Paradise Lost* and vitalize both the story and the wealth of literary learning which he lavished upon it. The subject of *Paradise Lost* surpasses in grandeur that usually chosen by the epic poet, for it deals not merely with one nation, but with the entire race of man, and with the very purposes of God. The poet was led to the theme by the experiences of his life and by the battle of the Puritan Commonwealth against the Stuart monarchy and the Established Church. To this theme he brought the learning of a man who had devoted his entire life, with the exception of that part of it spent in the service of his country as Latin Secretary of the Commonwealth, to the art of poetry, and to the attainment of true widsom through reading the best which literature then afforded in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, the Romance Languages, and German. Above all, Milton was inherently a poet who not only saw clearly whatever is eternally true and beautiful, but was enabled through his poetic technique to express in words the eternal truth and beauty of his vision.

The influence of *Paradise Lost* upon subsequent English narrative poetry cannot be adequately measured. Like all great poets Milton is inimitable, and although an occasional poet has imitated him in a long narrative, none has risen to his attainment. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Dryden and Pope, employing the heroic couplet instead of the Miltonic blank verse, translated Homer and Vergil, but they did not create original epics. During this period the machinery of the epic began to be employed for the purposes of travesty or mock-heroic verse, the one modern English masterpiece in this form being Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*. At the end of the eighteenth century Macpherson, with rather questionable fidelity to literary taste, renovated for British ears such fragments of Celtic epics as he had heard in the Highlands of Scotland, while Southey combined a rather baroque interest in improbable oriental tales with a classical strictness of form. In the nineteenth century the subjective and personal nature of the two literary periods known as the Romantic Revival and the Victorian Age led the great poets of both periods away from such sustained and rather objective efforts as the literary epic, for although much narrative poetry was written in the nineteenth century, as we shall see in Chapters III, IV, and V of this book, it was not in the form of the literary epic.

It is customary to ask whether the creation of literary epics is wholly an achievement of the past, but no answer can be given. Even though our modern world is extremely subjective and individualistic, one can never tell what forces may so reunite it as to make the literary epic once more a proper medium for its expression. As far as one can forecast, it would seem that the literary epic will always be one of the best forms for the expression of a spiritualized national or religious ideal. The need for it is constant, but its reappearance depends upon the existence of a poet fitted to write it, and an audience that can rise to its high elevation of spirit.

Note. An interpretative bibliography of the chief epics appears on pages 103-106.

CHAPTER I

SELECTIONS

BEOWULF

Note

Between the fourth and the seventh centuries of the Christian era Frisian, Angle, Saxon, Jutish, and many other tribes, of whom we know little more than their names, inhabited the coasts of the North Sea from the mouth of the Rhine north to the peninsula of Denmark, and also the islands and the south coast of the Baltic Sea. They were sea-raiders, who attacked and plundered the settlements of neighboring tribes. In literary history this era is known as the heroic age. Between 512-520 A. D. (as we learn from Gregory of Tours in his *History of the Franks*, Book III, Chapter 3), Hygelac, leader of the Geats—a tribe that lived in southern Sweden and on the island of Öland, east of southern Sweden—raided a Frisian tribe called the Hetware, that lived near the mouth of the Rhine. As he was returning to his ships with the plunder, he was surprised by an army of Franks and Frisians, and was slain with his followers. Only one warrior escaped; he plunged into the sea and swam away to safety. The name of this warrior was Beowulf. So much does history tell us of the hero of the epic poem which bears his name.

During this period three of the tribes we have mentioned were constantly emigrating to England, where they were well settled by the seventh century—the Angles in the north and upper eastern center of modern England, the Saxons in the lower center and southeast, and the Jutes in the country around Southampton and Kent. With them they brought their customs and traditions, and it was in England that some person acquainted with the writing taught by Christian monks set down, between the seventh and eighth centuries, with many interpolations of Christian doctrine, the epic poem which we know as *Beowulf*. (For the verse form see page 7.)

Beowulf relates three heroic deeds of Beowulf: the slaying of Grendel, Grendel's mother, and a dragon. Each of these adventures is related in one epic recital, or lay, and before the battle with the dragon is inserted a narrative of Beowulf's return home after the successful completion of the first two adventures. The poem, however, is not confined to the adventures of Beowulf, for during the story many other sagas are related either by the bard or by some character of the poem. Every incident reveals the life of the heroic age. Through the poem runs the love of the sea, of battle, and of a simple, homely code of ethics. *Beowulf* not only gives our first and best glimpse of Anglo-Saxon life, but its chief characteristics, both literary and social, persist throughout English literature.

The following translation, which was made by Mr. Munn, is of the entire poem. Wherever possible the alliterations, "kennings," and word compounds characteristic of the original have been preserved.

PART I

The Battle with Grendel

Lo! we have learned, by asking, the
might of the kings of the Spear-Danes,
in days of old, how the princes per-
formed deeds of strength. Oft Scyld
Scefing from bands of raiders, from
many peoples, took away the mead-
seats, frightened the earls, after he was
first found as a helpless child. He re-
ceived consolation for that; he grew
under the clouds, he throve in honors, 10
until every one of the dwellers beyond
the seas had to obey him, and pay
tribute. That was a good king! To
him an heir was later born, young in
his courts, whom God sent as a comfort
to the people; He perceived the dire
need which they formerly had suffered,
without a leader for a long while. To
them in compensation for this the Lord
of Life, the Ruler of Glory, gave world- 20
honor. Beowulf was famous; the

1. **Lo! we have learned.** The poem opens with a brief history of the Danish royal house. Scyld Scefing means "Shield, the son of the Sheaf." Scyld was found by the Danes in a boat upon the seashore when he was a child. In the boat evidently were treasures and a sheaf of wheat, for Scyld was the fabled hero who brought a knowledge of civilization to the Danes, whose kings traced their royal line back to him. Compare the genealogy which concludes the year 755 in the selection from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (page II-284). 6. **mead-seats,** table benches in the great hall. 21. **Beowulf,** an early king of the Danes, and not the hero of the poem. In the description of this king the poet indicates what any king should be. He must be a successful leader in battle, and he must care well for his warriors in time of peace by rewarding them with gifts of treasure. For this reason he is called by the nicknames, or kennings, of "gold-friend," "giver of rings," "distributor of treasure," etc.

fame of the son of Scyld spread wide in the lands of the Danes. So ought a young man to bring it about by noble gifts of treasure in the hall of his father that when he is old in turn, his willing companions may stand by their prince and serve him when battle comes. So shall a man grow prosperous among the people by praiseworthy deeds.

Scyld departed at the appointed time, mighty in battle, into the protection of the Lord. His dear companions bore him down to the stream of the ocean as he himself had commanded, while the lord of the Scyldings held power over his words—the dear ruler had long ruled over them. There in the harbor stood the ring-stemmed ship of the prince, icy and ready to sail. They laid down in the bosom of the ship their dear ruler, the giver of rings, the famous one, by the mast. They brought there also an abundance of treasure and ornaments from foreign lands. I never heard of a long-ship more nobly prepared with battle-weapons, with weeds of war, with swords and byrnies. By his bosom lay a multitude of treasures which should depart with him afar into the power of the flood. None the less did they provide him with gifts, with treasures of the people, than did those who at the beginning had sent him out alone over the waves, when he was a child. Moreover, they set high over his head a golden banner; they let the flood bear him away; they gave him to the ocean. To them was a sorrowful spirit, a mourning mind. Men cannot say truly, rulers of halls, heroes under the heavens, who received that lading.

Beowulf of the Scyldings, the dear folk-king, lived in the stronghold of his people for a long time, renowned among the people—his father had departed, his life had gone from him—until to him in turn was born the mighty Healfdane. He ruled, while he lived, aged and war-fierce, over the great Scyldings. To him, leader of war-bands, was born in succession into this world four children: Heorogar, and Hrothgar, and Halga the Good; I heard that Sigeneow was queen of Onela, dear consort of the Battle-Scylfing. Success in war was given to Hrothgar, and honor in battle; his loving kinsmen obeyed him gladly, so that his band of young warriors grew into a mighty troop of hero-sons.

It came into his mind that he would cause to be built a hall, a mighty mead-house, greater than the children of men had ever heard of, and therein divide between young and old all that which God had given him, except the share of his people and the lives of men. Then I heard proclaimed far and wide among many people throughout this earth the work of adorning the council-chamber of the folk. In time it came to pass among men that completed stood the mightiest of mead-halls. He named it Heorot, he who far and wide ruled by his words. He did not belie his promise; he dealt out rings and treasures at the banquet. The hall towered high and wide under its gables,

11. **Scyld departed.** The Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon tribes dwelling on the shores of the North Sea and the Baltic Sea had burial customs which varied from the first to the sixth centuries of our era. At first the soul of the dead warrior was supposed to journey to another world, and therefore his body was sent out to sea on his ship, equipped with his weapons, treasures, hawk, dog, and war-horse. Sometimes the boat was set on fire. For this form of burial, there was substituted, about the sixth century, the burial in a grave-mound of the warrior in his boat with his war equipment and treasures. His horse, dog, and hawk were killed, and were placed beside him. In this era the warrior might be burned on a pyre, and his ashes were placed with his equipment in the grave-mound. In *Beowulf* these two forms of burial are described, for Scyld is sent out to sea, while Beowulf and Hnaef are each burned on a pyre and then buried in a mound (see page 25, line 78, and page 51, line 31). 16. **Scyldings** (descendants of Scyld), the name of the ruling Danish house, and of the Danes as well. 19. **ring-stemmed.** The timbers at the prow were wrapped with ropes or with rings of metal in order to bind the boat firmly together at this point. 28. **byrnies,** coats-of-mail.

56. **Onela,** king of Sweden, and son of that Ongentheow with whom the tribe of the Geats, to which Beowulf belonged, waged a bitter feud, of which we are told later in the poem (see note on line 83, page 41, and the passage on page 48, lines 76 ff, to which it alludes). The chieftains of Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon tribes gave their daughters in marriage to chieftains of other tribes with the hope of preventing or allaying feuds. *Beowulf* furnishes many examples of the ill success of this policy. 57. **Scylfing,** the name of the Swedish royal house and of the people. These names were often compounded with epithets of renown, such as "battle," "victory," etc. 76. **Heorot,** Hart or Stag Hall. Probably antlers crowned the gable ends of the roof.

awaiting the waves of battle and of destructive flame. Nor was it long after, that sword-hate broke out between uncle and nephew on account of a deadly feud.

The mighty demon who lurked in darkness choked back his anger for a while, as he heard every day the crowd rejoicing in the hall. There was the sound of the harp, the clear singing of the minstrel. He related, he who knew how to tell the creation of men of old, how the Almighty had made the earth, the beautiful bright plain which the sea surrounds, and had set, exulting in victory, the splendor of the sun and the moon as a light for the dwellers upon earth, and adorned the regions of the world with trees and leaves; life also He created in each of the tribes who wander upon the face of the earth. Thus the troop of warriors lived prosperously in joy until one began to work deeds of horror, a fiend from hell. The grim demon was called Grendel, the notorious marsh-stalker, who held the moors, the fens, and the crags. The unhappy creature had dwelt for a long time in the home of the monster-brood since the Creator had proscribed him. Upon the tribe of Cain the Eternal Judge avenged that death, because he had slain Abel. Cain did not rejoice at that feud, for God, the Creator, had driven him far away from mankind because of his crime. Thence sprang all the evil progeny of the world: Eotens, and elves, and monsters; likewise the giants who fought against God for a long time. He gave them their reward.

The monster straightway started to visit the high-hall when night came on, to discover how the Ring-Danes had bestowed themselves in it after their carousal. He found therein a noble band, sleeping after the banquet; they did not know sorrow, the misery of men. The outlawed creature, grim and greedy, was soon ready; fierce and furious he snatched from their resting-place thirty thanes. Thence again he departed for home, exulting in plunder, to revisit his lair with his kill.

At the dawn of day the war-might of Grendel was made manifest to men. After the feast weeping arose, a mighty clamor in the morning. The renowned ruler, the excellent prince, sat dejected; he, strong in might, suffered, as he experienced sorrow for his warriors, when the survivors observed the hateful trace of the cursed demon. That struggle was too strong, hateful, and long drawn out; nor was there a longer interval than one night before he again made another kill—and took no thought of it—before he carried on the feud and crime; he was too intent upon his own purposes. Then was it easy to find many who sought elsewhere more spacious quarters in which to rest, beds in other sleeping-halls, when the hate of the hell-monster was made clear to them. Thereafter, whoever had escaped the fiend kept himself farther away and was much more cautious.

So the demon ruled and fought against right, alone against all, until idle stood the best of halls. It was a long time! Twelve winters did the dear lord of the Scyldings endure insult and every manner of woe; until it became openly known among the sons of men through mournful ballads how Grendel had been warring for a long time with Hrothgar; he carried on hateful enmity

2. **Nor was it long after**, etc., an example of Anglo-Saxon foreboding. The fate of most tribal stockades was to be burned completely as the culmination of some blood-feud. We know from other accounts that Hrothulf, Hrothgar's nephew, murdered Hrethric, son of Hrothgar, and burned Heorot. Later on in this poem, Wealhtheow, wife of Hrothgar, tries by every means in her power to keep peace between Hrothulf and her sons, and she asks Beowulf to help the boys when they grow older. 13. **the Almighty**, etc. Although the spirit of *Beowulf* is heathen, yet there are Christian interpolations, which were made probably after the poem had been carried from the Continent to England. 37. **evil progeny**. The monsters of Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon mythology usually had animal bodies, but a more or less human intelligence. 38. **Eotens**, giants, or possibly a Teutonic or Scandinavian tribe.

44. **Ring-Danes**, wealthy Danes, for golden rings or circlets were a sign of wealth and were given to warriors by a king as a reward for valor. 52. **thanes**. The Anglo-Saxon tribes had social stratifications. The nobles were *eorls*, and the common people *ceorls*. While *thane* meant, originally, "servant," it came to mean a chief subordinate to the tribal leader, or ealdorman. 75. **Thereafter**, etc., a good specimen of grim Anglo-Saxon humor. Obviously one was not certain to be undisturbed if he slept in Grendel's path. 86. **through mournful ballads**. Minstrels carried the news from one tribe to another in ballads of their own composition.

through crime and hostility for many half-years. It was a continuous strife; for he would not through love of any one of the troop of the Danes leave off from life-slaughter, or accept blood-money. Nor did any man dare to expect better treatment at the hands of the slayer; for the enemy was always on the warpath against the experienced warriors and the young warriors; the dark death-shadow lay in wait and trapped them; during long nights he held the misty moors. Men do not know where the hell-demons prowl.

So the enemy of mankind, the horrible solitary one, often brought to pass many crimes and cruel humiliations. Upon dark nights he inhabited Heorot, the hall gleaming with treasure. By no means could he approach the throne and its treasure because of the Lord God; he did not know His love.

This was a great misery to the dear lord of the Scyldings, grief of soul. Many a time the mighty king sat in council, and with his councilors considered what were best for the stout-hearted warriors to do against these sudden terrors. At times they promised sacrifices at heathen fanes; they prayed that the devil would help them against the national misery. Such was their custom, the hope of the heathen. They kept hell in their thoughts; they did not know the Lord, the Judge of Deeds; they did not know Almighty God, nor how to praise the Protector of the Heavens, the Ruler of Glory. Wretched is he whose fate it is through dangerous hate to cast his soul down into the embrace of hell-fire, to expect no consolation, to mend his ways not at all! Happy is he who may after the day of his death visit the Judge and in the bosom of the Father ask protection!

So the son of Healfdane brooded continually upon his sorrow; nor might the wise hero ward off his woe. That strife was too severe, deadly, and long drawn out which had come upon the people; dire ruin, maliciously grim, most fearful of night-slaughters.

At his home did the thane of Hygelac, the good man among the Geats, hear about the deeds of Grendel. He was of mankind the mightiest in strength in the days of this life, noble and mature. He commanded that there be made ready for him a good wave-goer; he said that he intended to visit the war-king, the mighty prince, over the swan-road, since there was need to him of men. Nor did the wise councilors in any way blame Beowulf for this expedition, though he was dear to them; they encouraged the strong-hearted one; they foresaw good-luck. The good man had chosen from the people of the Geats the boldest warriors that he could find. With fifteen companions he sought the wooden sea-voyager; a sea-crafty man pointed out the landmarks.

Time rolled on; the ship was on the waves; the boat under the hills. The eager warriors climbed over the stern. The sea-floods thundered upon the sand. The men bore into the bosom of the ship bright adornments, splendid war- rmor. They shoved off the bound-wood ship upon a willing journey. The foamy-necked floater, impelled by the wind, swept over the billowy sea like a bird, until about the same time on the next day the wound-stemmed boat had gone so far that the sailors saw land, the sea-cliffs gleaming, the wide sea-headlands. Thus was the sea traversed; the voyage was at an end.

Out of the ship to land quickly climbed the people of the Weders and tied the sea-wood. The mail-shirts and war-weeds

2. **half-years,** the seasons of winter and summer. 5. **blood-money.** Early justice permitted the payment of a fine to atone for murder. 9. **experienced warriors . . . young warriors.** Each war-band of the Anglo-Saxons included a group of seasoned warriors and a group of young warriors who were learning the art of war. 22. **His love,** more Christian interpolation. 43. **Happy is he,** etc. Here is one of the earliest examples of Anglo-Saxon pondering and moralizing upon the mystery of life.

55. **Hygelac.** Beowulf was at this time a young warrior of the Geats in the troop of Hygelac, his uncle and king of the Geats. 61, 63. **wave-goer,** ship; **swan-road,** ocean. These are good examples of kennings, or nicknames, in which Anglo-Saxon poetry abounded. 76. **Time rolled on . . . . easy for them.** The action of an epic moves very rapidly when the poet wishes. 87. **wound-stemmed.** The bow timbers were lashed together with ropes. 94. **Weders,** another name for the Geats.

rattled; the warriors thanked God that the paths of the sea had been made easy for them.

From the high bank the coast-guard of the Scyldings, whose office it was to hold the sea-cliffs, saw them bearing bright shields over the gangplank—ready war-armor; curiosity disturbed his thoughts as to who the men might be. The thane of Hrothgar galloped down to the shore on horseback and mightily brandished in his hands a strong wooden spear, and spake words of good counsel: "What warriors are ye, protected by byrnies, who thus the great ship have brought hither over the sea-road upon the waves? I have been coast-guard here for some time, and have watched the seacoast so that no enemies might come upon the land of the Danes to ravage it by a raid from the sea. Never have I seen shield-bearers attempt to land here more openly, for ye do not know at all the password of warriors. Never have I seen upon this earth a mightier earl than is that man with ye in armor. He is not one who stays in the hall, equipped as he is with weapons, unless his countenance belies him, his matchless visage. I intend to know at once your lineage before ye go hence farther into the lands of the Danes as false spies. Now ye far-dwellers, sea-farers, hear my plain thought: it is best for ye to make known at once where ye come from."

Him the leader of the band answered, senior in rank, and unlocked the word-hoard: "We are of mankind the people of the Geats and hearth-companions of Hygelac. My father, who was renowned among the people, noble leader in battle, was called Ecgtheow. The ancient man lived many winters before he departed from his courts. Him every man remembers well throughout the wide world. We with friendly purpose come to seek thy lord, the son of Healfdane, the protector of the people. Be thou to us of good guidance. We have an important errand for the mighty one, the lord of the Danes; nor shall there be anything hidden of what I intend. Thou knowest whether it is true, as we have heard rumor, that among the Scyldings lurks an unknown enemy, a secret hate-worker, who upon dark nights reveals in a horrible way unthought-of hatred, humiliation, and slaughter-havoc. I may counsel Hrothgar through mature consideration how he, aged and good, may overcome his enemy, if ever a change of fortune shall bring again an end to his evil affliction, and the waves of care become cooler; else ever afterwards shall he endure bitter oppression, dire need, and time of tribulation, while the best of halls stands upon the high-place."

Then answered the coast-guard where he sat on horseback, the fearless officer: "By words and deeds should a keen shield-warrior be able to distinguish him who has good intentions. I understand that this band is friendly to the lord of the Scyldings. Proceed, then, bearing your weapons and armor; I will guide you. I will also direct my kinsmen-thanes to protect your new-tarred bark on the sand against every enemy, until the wooden ship with curved prow shall bear the beloved hero back home again over the sea-streams to the coast of the Weders. To such a doer of good deeds it will be granted that he shall survive unharmed the rush of battle."

They proceeded on their journey. The broad-beamed ship remained behind, fast at anchor. The boar-images, glittering and hardened in the fire, adorned with gold, shone above the cheek-protectors; they were talismans for the valiant men. As the warriors hastened inland, the pathway rose until they perceived the timbered hall, splendid and adorned with gold. To the dwellers on earth that was most famous of all buildings under the heavens in which the mighty ruler awaited them; the gleam shone over many lands. The

21. raid from the sea. The stockaded tribal halls were situated far enough away from the sea to prevent a surprise attack—hence the coast-guard—yet not too far to prevent easy access to the boats of the tribe.
38. unlocked the word-hoard, kenning for *spoke.*

90. boar-images. The crests of the Geatish and Danish helmets were made in the image of boars, and were usually overlaid with iron, bronze, or gold.

battle-brave man pointed out the hall of the proud ones in order that the warriors might go straight to it. Then the guide of the warriors turned his horse and spake: "It is time for me to depart; may the Father Almighty with his mercy keep ye safe upon this expedition. I will to the sea and hold guard against hostile bands."

10 The way was paved with bright stones; the path directed the men on their journey. The war-byrnies, hand-forged and tough, glittered brightly; the hard ring-iron clanked upon the warriors as they came striding nearer to the hall in their terrible array. Weary of the sea they set down against the wall of the building their wide shields, the bucklers wondrous hard; they 20 placed themselves upon the benches. Their byrnies rang, the war-armor of men. The spears of ash-wood, gray at the point, the weapons of the seamen, stood stacked together. Truly this iron band of warriors was well provided with weapons. Straightway a man perceived the warriors and asked after their lineage: "Whence come ye with plated shields, gray sarks, and visored 30 helmets, with a stack of spear-shafts? I am the messenger and herald of Hrothgar. I never saw so large and mighty a band of strangers. I believe that ye through daring and strength of heart sought Hrothgar, and not through exile."

Him the proud and courageous leader of the Weders answered, brave under his helmet, and spake: "We are Hyge-40 lac's table-companions. Beowulf is my name. I wish to declare my errand to the son of Healfdane, the renowned prince, to the lord, if he will permit that we may approach the excellent man."

Wulfgar spake—he was chief of the Wendels; his courage was known to many, his valor and wisdom: "I will inform the friend of the Danes, the dear lord of the Scyldings, the giver of rings, 50 that thou dost desire to approach the famous prince, and I will bear thee the answer again which the good man thinks best to give me."

He departed straightway to where Hrothgar sat, aged and snow-haired, among his band of earls. He went, full of might, until he stood by the shoulder of the lord of the Danes; well did he know court etiquette. Wulfgar spake to his dear lord: "Here 60 are come from afar over the expanse of the sea some of the people of the Geats. The leader of the warriors is named Beowulf. They ask, my prince, that they may exchange words with thee. Do not show them refusal in thy reply, most amiable Hrothgar, for they in their war-equipment appear to be earls worth high esteem. Especially is the chief who leads hither these warriors 70 a splendid man."

Hrothgar spake, the protector of the Scyldings: "I knew him when he was a boy. His aged father was named Ecgtheow, to whom Hrethel of the Geats gave his only daughter; and now his bold son has come hither and sought a kindly ruler. Some time ago sea-travelers told me this, who brought hither gifts of treasure out of courtesy, 80 that he, the battle-strong one, had in his hand-grasp the might of thirty men. Him has Holy God sent to us West-Danes for a merciful help, as I expect, against the terror of Grendel. I shall offer the good man treasures as a reward for his courage. Hasten now to bid them come in and see the kindred-band of warriors gathered together; tell them also that they are welcome to the people 90 of the Danes."

Wulfgar departed to the doors of the hall and spake from within: "The lord of the East-Danes, my victorious lord, commands me to tell ye that he is acquainted with your noble descent, and that ye brave-minded ones who have come hither over the sea-waves are welcome. Now ye may enter in your war-armor, under your visored 100 helmets, to see Hrothgar; but leave your shields and your wooden deadly-

29. **gray sarks**, coats-of-mail. 36. **exile**, i. e., to obtain either protection or restoration to their home. 46. **Wendels**, a tribe; probably subject to Hrothgar.

75. **Hrethel**, a king of the Geats, father of Hygelac, and a grandfather of Beowulf. Cf. page 39, line 63, and page 42, line 77.

shafted spears here to await the issue of your conversation."

Rose then the mighty one, and about him many a man, an excellent group of thanes. Some stayed there and guarded the battle-equipment, as the courageous one commanded. The others entered, as the herald directed them, under the roof of Heorot. The valiant-minded leader went, courageous under his helmet, until he stood on the hearth.

Beowulf spake—on him his byrnie shone, the ringed armor, by the skill of the smith: "Hail! Hrothgar. I am the relative and kinsman-thane of Hygelac. Even in youth I have undertaken many deeds of glory. To me the affair of Grendel became known on my native soil. Sailors told me that this hall, the best of houses, stands idle and useless for every man, after the evening light under the vault of heaven is taken away. Then the best of my people, the wise councilors, advised me to come to thee, Lord Hrothgar, because they knew my strength; they had seen it themselves when I came from the battle, stained with the blood of my enemies, where I bound five, and destroyed the brood of giants, and on the waves slew sea-monsters by night. I endured dire distress, avenged the affliction of the Weders who had experienced woes; I hacked to pieces their enemies. And now with the monster Grendel as adversary do I intend to hold a meeting alone. I now ask thee a boon, prince of the Bright-Danes, lord of the Scyldings: do not deny me, protector of warriors, friend of the people, now that I have come hither from afar, that I may alone, I and my troop of earls, this band of brave warriors, cleanse Heorot. I have learned also that this adversary in his madness cares not for weapons; I therefore disdain to bear sword or wide yellow shield into the combat, so may Hygelac, my liege lord, be to me friendly in mind! But I in my fury will grapple with the hated enemy and contend with life at stake. He whom death takes must resign himself to the judgment of God. I believe that Grendel will gorge unafraid in the war-hall upon the people of the Geats, as he often did upon the mighty band of Danes. Nor shalt thou need to set a death-watch over my head, for he will take me away, stained with blood, if death seizes me. He will bear away the bloody corpse, since he intends to gorge himself; the solitary prowler will eat it without any regret—he will stain his moor-retreats. Nor needest thou worry longer about food for my body! Send to Hygelac, if death takes me, the best of battle-shrouds which protects my breast, mightiest of garments. It is a bequest to me from Hrethel, the work of Weland. Fate always goes where it will!"

Hrothgar spake, the protector of the Scyldings: "For the sake of exploits, my friend Beowulf, and for a help hast thou come to us. Thy father brought upon himself the mightiest of feuds; he was the slayer of Heatholaf among the Wylfings. Him the tribe of the Weders dared not keep for fear of the army; thence he came to the people of the South-Danes, to the Honor-Scyldings, over the paths of the waves. At that time I was beginning to rule the people of the Danes; in my youth I possessed an ample kingdom, a mighty stronghold of heroes. Heorogar had died, my eldest brother, the son of Healfdane. He was a better man than I! Afterwards Hygelac settled the feud for money. I sent him to the Wylfings with ancient treasure over the crest of the water. He swore me oaths of friendship. Sorrow is it for me to reveal in my heart to any man the humiliations which Grendel has caused me in Heorot with his hateful thoughts and his sudden enmity. My war-troop, my band of warriors, is vanishing; Fate swept them away in the terror of Gren-

16. **many deeds of glory.** Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon warriors before embarking upon a new adventure boasted of their past achievements.

69. **Weland,** the magic smith of Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon mythology. 70. **Fate always goes where it will,** one of the keys to Anglo-Saxon, English, and American character. Fate controls; therefore carry on. This idea appears often in this book from *Beowulf* to the latest post-war English or American poet. Note especially W. V. Moody's lyric, commencing "Of wounds and sore defeat I made my battle stay" (page 679) and Louis Untermeyer's "Reveille" (page 703).

del. Yet God easily can cut him off from his mad career. Full often have my warriors boasted, drunken with beer over the ale-tankards, that they in the drink-hall intended to await the attack of Grendel with the terrors of the sword. On the next morning this mead-hall, this noble building, glittered with blood when daylight gleamed, and all the banquet-benches were soaked in gore. The entire hall dripped with blood and slaughter. I possessed that many the fewer faithful warriors because death had taken them away. But sit down now to the banquet and unbind to these men thy thoughts, confident in victory, as thy mind may urge thee."

Then for the sons of the Geats were benches cleared in the beer-hall, and the stout-hearted men went and sat down, proud in their strength. A thane attended to his office, who bore in his hand an adorned ale-tankard; he poured out bright mead. The clear-voiced minstrel sang in Heorot. There was joy among the heroes, a mighty band of Danes and Weders.

Unferth spake, the son of Ecglaf, who sat at the feet of the lord of the Scyldings; he commenced a quarrel—the visit of Beowulf, the mighty sea-traveler, was a great vexation to him because he grudged that any other man should obtain under the heavens more glory than himself: "Art thou that Beowulf who contended with Breca, strove with him in swimming upon the wide sea, where ye two, through pride, made trial of the waters, and because of a mad boast ventured your lives upon the deep? Nor might any man whether well or ill-disposed toward ye prevent ye from your sorrowful journey, but ye two swam out into the sound, where the tides of ocean covered your arms; ye passed over the sea-roads, ye dashed the waves with your hands, ye glided through the sea. The ocean boiled with waves, with the surge of winter. Ye two in the grip of the flood toiled seven nights. He overcame thee at swimming, for he had more strength, and in the morning-time the flood bore him up upon the country of the Battle-Reams. Thence he, the beloved of his people, sought his dear fatherland, the land of the Brondings, the fair stronghold of protection, where he held command of people, town, and treasures. All his boast against thee the son of Beanstan truthfully fulfilled. Now I expect that thou wilt get the worst of the bargain, though thou hast shown thyself ever to be doughty in the battle-rush, if thou darest all night long to await coming into close quarters with Grendel."

Beowulf spake, the son of Ecgtheow: "Lo! thou, my friend Unferth, drunk with beer, hast spoken a great deal about the venture of Breca! I claim it as the truth that I possessed the greater strength in swimming and endured greater hardships upon the waves than any other man.

"When we were boys, we two pledged each other and made our boast—we were both then still in the youth of life—that we would risk our lives in the ocean, and so we did. When we swam out into the sound each one of us had in his hand a strong naked sword with which we intended to guard ourselves from whales. He could not swim away from me upon the waves of the flood by being more quick upon the sea, nor would I swim away from him. For five nights were we together upon the sea, until the flood drove us apart, the boiling waves, coldest of storms; the darkening night and the wind from the north blew straight against us, battle-grim. Fierce were the waves; the anger of the sea-monsters was aroused. Then my hard hand-woven body-sark gave me help against the attackers: the woven battle-garment, decked with gold, which lay upon my chest. A savage foe drew me down to the bottom; grimly did he hold me fast in his grip. However, it was granted me

3. boasted. The Anglo-Saxons were great boasters and gamblers. When drunk they would make wild boasts, to which their sober companions would hold them on the following morning. In gambling, likewise, an audacious player would often stake his body as a wager, and, if he lost, would serve as the winner's slave. **29. Unferth,** Hrothgar's orator, or spokesman. **37. Breca,** a youthful chief of the Brondings.

that I reached my adversary with the point of my battle-sword. Through my hand the war-rush swept away the mighty sea-beast. Frequently my hostile opponents pressed me hard; then I served them with the costly sword as was fitting. They did not rejoice in their feast, the evildoers, nor did they taste me, sitting around the banquet near the bottom of the sea; but in the morning, wounded by my weapon, they lay up along the sea-beach, put to sleep by the sword, so that never afterwards did they upon the high seas hinder seafarers from their journey. Light came from the east, the bright beacon of God. The waves had subsided until I could behold the sea-headlands, the wind-swept crags. Fate often preserves an earl not destined to death, if his might avails. It so chanced that I slew with my sword nine sea-monsters. Never have I heard of harder fighting by night under the vault of heaven, nor in the tides of the ocean of a more wretched man. Yet I survived the attack of the hostile ones with my life, though weary of my journey. The sea bore me up, the flood along its courses, the boiling waters, to the land of the Finns. By no means have I ever heard tell concerning thee of such exploits in arms or terror of the sword. Breca never yet in battle-play, nor either of ye, performed so valorous a deed with your bright swords—I do not wish to boast about this exploit—even though thou wert the murderer of thy brother, thy near relative. For this thou shalt in hell suffer damnation. I tell thee truly, son of Ecglaf, that never would Grendel, the horrible adversary, have performed so many deeds of terror upon thy prince, humiliation in Heorot, if thy thoughts were as battle-grim as thou thyself claimest. But he has discovered that he need not be afraid of the terrible sword-storm from thy people, the Victory-Scyldings; he exacts forced toll. He respects none of the people of the Danes, but he fights according to his desire; he slays and feasts; he does not expect opposition from the Spear-Danes. But I shall ere long in battle proclaim to him the might and strength of the Geats. Let him who can survive go proudly for his reward, when the morning light of another day, the radiant sun, shines from the south over the children of men!"

Then was the giver of treasure filled with bliss, snow-haired and war-famed; the lord of the Bright-Danes believed that help had come, when the guardian of the people heard the steadfast resolution of Beowulf. There arose the laughter of heroes; the sound of joy resounded; their talk was joyful.

Wealhtheow, the queen of Hrothgar, moved about, mindful of etiquette. She greeted the gold-decked man in the hall, and the noble lady handed first the cup to the guardian of the inheritance of the East-Danes, bade him be blithe at the beer-drinking, beloved by his people. He with joy partook of the banquet and hall-cup, the king famous in victory. The lady of the Helmings went about to each one of the older and the younger warriors; she gave treasure until the time arrived that she, the ring-adorned queen, discreet in mind, bore the mead-cup to Beowulf. She, wise in words, greeted the prince of the Geats; she thanked God that her wish had been fulfilled that she might believe any earl could bring consolation from suffering. He, fierce in the deadly fight, partook of the cup at the hands of Wealhtheow and then spake, prepared for battle.

Beowulf spake, the son of Ecgtheow: "I intended, when I embarked on the ocean and sat down in the sea-boat with my band of warriors, that I once and for all would accomplish the wish of your people, or else fall a corpse in the grip of the demon. I shall perform a deed of princely strength, or I shall abide my last day in this mead-hall."

7. **They did not rejoice**, etc., some more grim humor. There is always a contrast between what is expected and what happens. 38. **murderer of thy brother**. Beowulf knows Unferth's record as well as Unferth knows that of Beowulf. Probably in some feud Unferth had not stood by his brother enough to satisfy the dictates of honor, though we hear of no family feud in this case.

73. **guardian**, etc., Hrothgar. 78. **Helmings**, the tribe from which Wealhtheow came.

These words well pleased the woman, the boast of the Geat. The noble queen of the people went gold-adorned to sit beside her lord. Then once more, as formerly, words of might were spoken in the hall; the people rejoiced; there was the noise of the victorious folk, until presently the son of Healfdane desired to retire to his evening rest. He knew what battle was in store for the champion of the high-hall as soon as they might no longer see the light of the sun; when night darkened over all, then the shapes of the shadows came stalking, dark under the clouds. The troop all arose.

Hrothgar greeted Beowulf and wished him good-luck, gave him command of the wine-hall, and spake this word: "Never have I entrusted the mighty building of the Danes to any man, since I have been able to raise hand and shield, except to thee on this occasion. Have now and hold the best of houses! Keep glory in mind, show mighty strength, be on guard against thy foes. There shall be no lack of desirable things for thee, if thou this mighty work shalt survive with thy life."

Hrothgar, the protector of the Scyldings, departed with his band of warriors. The war-lord rejoined Wealhtheow, the queen, his bedfellow. The King of Glory had set a hall-guard against Grendel, as men found out; he performed a special service for the ruler of the Danes. He kept watch against the monster. Truly the prince of the Geats trusted gladly in his strength and in the favor of God. He took off his iron byrnie, and his helmet from his head. He gave to his attendant-thane his fretted sword, most choice of iron weapons, and commanded him to guard his trappings of war.

Then spake Beowulf of the Geats, the good man, a boasting word before he lay down upon his bed: "I do not consider myself inferior in war-might or in the works of war to what Grendel considers himself to be; for this reason I will not kill him with a sword, deprive him of life, though I really could do so. He does not know of these customs, how to strike at me in this way, hew down my shield, although he is bold in works of battle; but we tonight shall do without swords, if he will attempt battle without weapon, and afterwards may God in his wisdom, the Holy Judge, give glory to whichever side seems to Him best."

The battle-bold one laid himself down to rest, the cheek-bolster received the face of the earl, and about him many keen sea-heroes lay down upon the hall-rest. Not one of them expected that he would ever revisit his beloved home, his people, or the noble stronghold where he had been brought up; for they had learned that before them far too many had slaughter-death taken away in the wine-hall of the people of the Danes. But to them the Lord gave the webs of war-success, comfort and help to the people of the Weders, that their enemies through the might of one man were overcome. Thus truly is it made known how mighty God rules over mankind from generation to generation.

The shadow-goer came stalking through the dark night. The warriors slept whose duty it was to guard the gabled house—all but one. Then was it made known to men that the spectral enemy might not pull them away any more into the shadows, since God forbade it; but Beowulf watched against the mischief of his enemy, determined in mind upon the issue of battle.

Over the misty moor came Grendel striding; he bore the curse of God; the deadly foe intended to ensnare one of mankind in the high hall. He hastened under the clouds until he came upon the wine-house, the gold-hall of men, glittering with plaques of gold. It was not the first time that he had paid a visit to the home of Hrothgar, but never did he find in the days of his life, before or since, braver heroes. The monster,

43. **fretted**, with raised work on the hilt.

75. **webs**, an allusion to the web of destiny which the Norns, or Scandinavian Fates, wove. Gray wrote about this web in the ode entitled "The Fatal Sisters" (page 422) and he mentions the weaving in the second major division of "The Bard" (page 420).

deprived of joy, came to the building. The door straightway sprang open, though fastened with fire-forged bolts, as soon as he touched it with his hands. With evil intent he burst open the entrance to the building, for he was angry. Immediately thereafter the fiend trod upon the bright floor, raging in mind. From his eyes gleamed an ominous light most like a flame. He saw sleeping together in the building many men, a kindred band, a group of young warriors; he laughed aloud in his mind. The horrible demon intended before day came to separate the life from the limbs of each one of them, since he had hope of an abundant meal. But it was no longer fated that he might touch more of mankind after that night. The mighty kinsman of Hygelac beheld how the wicked prowler intended to proceed in his terrible attacks. Nor did the adversary purpose to delay, but he straightway gripped, as he had at former times, a sleeping man, tore him apart unawares, crunched his body, drank the blood-streams, swallowed one piece after another. Soon he had devoured all of the lifeless one, even the feet and the hands. He stepped forward nearer, and grasped with his hand the great-hearted hero upon the bed. The fiend reached toward him with his grip; the hero straightway grappled him with hostile intent, and threw himself on his elbow. Soon the chief crime-worker discovered that he had never met anywhere on earth in other men a mightier hand-grip. Fear seized his heart, but he might not the sooner away. His desire was to escape; he wanted to flee into the darkness to rejoin the pack of devils. His experience there was not like that which he had ever found before in the days of his life.

Then the courageous kinsman of Hygelac remembered his evening speech; he stood up and grappled fast with Grendel. His fingers cracked; the monster made for the door; the earl stepped forward. The fiend intended, if he could do so, to flee away into his fen-retreats; he knew that the control of his fingers rested in the grip of his adversary. It was a sorrowful journey that the harmful raider had taken to Heorot. The lordly hall resounded. Dry-throated panic came upon all of the bold Danes who inhabited the stronghold. Angry were both the guardians of the hall; the building rattled. It was a great wonder that the wine-hall withstood the battle-brave ones, that it had not fallen to the ground, the fair earth-building; but it was cunningly reënforced within and without with iron clamps. I heard that many a gold-adorned mead-bench was torn away from the floor where those hostile ones fought. The wise men of the Scyldings formerly did not expect that any men with the usual amount of strength could smash it to pieces, well-built as it was, adorned with antlers, or destroy it by cunning, unless the embrace of the fire should swallow it in smoke. The noise arose startling enough. Horrible fear came upon each one of the North-Danes, who from the walls heard the lament, the terror-song of the adversary of God, a song without hope of victory, the hell-captive bewailing his pain. But that man held him too fast who was the strongest of men in the days of this life.

The protector of earls would not for anything let go alive this murderous comer; he did not account Grendel's life-days as useful to any of the people.

Many an earl of Beowulf drew his ancient sword-heirloom and wanted to protect the life of his dear lord, of his famous prince; but they might not do so. They did not know, when they undertook to join the strife, and when the courageous-minded warriors attempted to strike in every direction to reach the soul of the fiendish enemy, that even the choicest of swords upon this earth, no war-weapon could harm him, for he had laid a spell upon all victory-weapons, upon each sword. But his life-parting was destined to be

61. **guardians of the hall.** Notice the irony of the term. Grendel guarded it for evil, Beowulf for good.
102. **laid a spell.** These monsters were usually safe from all weapons except those whose magic powers excelled their own.

miserable, and the other-world spirit was to journey far into the power of the fiends.

Then he discovered, who formerly, cheerful in mind, had perpetrated many crimes against mankind—he was the enemy of God—that his body did not follow him, but that him the brave son of Hygelac held by the hand; each was hostile to the other one's being alive. The horrible monster received a body-hurt; an incurable wound appeared upon his shoulder. The sinews sprang apart; the joint burst. To Beowulf was given fame in battle. Grendel thence had to flee for his life under the fen-slopes to regain his cheerless dwelling. He knew surely that the end of his life had come, the number of his days. By this slaughter-attack the wish of all the Danes was fulfilled.

Thus did he who had come from afar, wise and mighty-souled, cleanse the hall of Hrothgar, preserve it against war. He rejoiced at the night-work, at the deed of strength. The chief of the Geats had fulfilled his boast to the East-Danes. Likewise had he made good all their distress, foe-malice which they formerly had endured, and the dire compulsion which they had had to suffer, no little anguish. The evidence was plain, when the battle-bold Beowulf hung up the hand, the arm, and the shoulder—the entire arm-grip of Grendel—under the high roof.

In the morning I heard that many a warrior was about the gift-hall; the leaders of the people came from far and near along the distant ways to behold the wonder, the traces of the enemy. Nor did his departure from life seem sad to any of the men who looked upon the tracks of the vanquished one; how he, weary in mind, overcome in combat, dragged himself away, doomed and banished, to the pool of the sea-monsters. The waves boiled with blood; the horrible eddy mingled with hot blood; it welled with sword-blood; the death-doomed one had dyed it when deprived of joy. He laid down his life in his fen-lair, his heathen soul, when hell took him.

Thence they returned again from the joyous journey, the old companions and likewise many a young man, from the mighty tarn, riding upon their white horses. The renown of Beowulf was proclaimed. Many a man said often that neither south nor north between the two seas of the vast earth was any other warrior under the circuit of heaven more worthy to be a ruler. Yet they did not in any wise blame their dear lord, gracious Hrothgar; for he was a good king.

Sometimes the battle-renowned ones caused their bay horses to gallop, ran them in races where the roads of the earth seemed suitable and well known for their excellence. At times a thane of the king, a man laden with glorious words, skilled in songs, who knew a very large number of the old sagas, found new words bound together in truth. The man began in turn to treat skillfully the journey of Beowulf and compose excellently a wondrous tale, to arrange it in words. He told everything that he had heard about the mighty deeds of Sigemund; much that was unknown about the contest of the son of Waels and his wide journeys, which the children of men did not know at all, his feuds and dire deeds, except Fitela, who had been with him, to whom he had told some of them at one time and another, the uncle to his nephew, since they were ever together as companions in difficulty, in each of their war struggles; they laid low many of the tribe of giants with the sword. To Sigemund there arose after his death-day no little glory, when he had slain the bold dragon in battle, the guardian of the treasure-hoard. The son of the prince ventured a desperate deed in under the gray rock, alone; Fitela was not with him. Nevertheless Fate granted to him that he pierced the glittering dragon with his sword so that

78. **compose**, etc., a good example of how popular ballads were composed on the spur of the moment. 82. **Sigemund**, a hero of the *Volsung Saga* (see reference to it on page 105). In *Beowulf* he slays the dragon; in the *Volsung Saga* his son or nephew, Siegfried, slays it. 86. **Fitela**, Siegfried. 93. **giants.** These giants often turned themselves into dragons, as did Fafnir, whom Sigemund is here described as slaying. In Wagner's *Siegfried* the adventure is Siegfried's.

it struck through to the cave wall, the noble iron weapon. The dragon died the death. The champion through his might had brought it about that he might enjoy the ring-hoard as he wished. The son of Waels loaded a sea-boat; he brought into the bosom of the ship bright adornments. The fiery dragon melted away.

He was of wanderers the most famous among the nations of men, protector of warriors by deeds of strength; he throve in honors after the time when battle had caused to wane the vigor and strength of Heremod, who was betrayed among the Eotens into the power of his enemies and was quickly swept away. Him the surges of sorrow battered too long; he became to his people, to all his warriors, a life-care. Likewise in days of yore the departure of the stout-hearted one many a wise man often lamented, who had trusted in him for betterment of misfortunes, and had hoped that the son of the prince would bring help to his nation, receive the ancestral power, take command of his people, the treasure-hoard, the protecting stronghold, the realm of heroes, the inheritance of the Scyldings. By his deeds the son of Hygelac became very famous to all mankind; but crime swept Heremod away.

Meantime, racing their horses, they passed over the tawny roads. The light of morning was advanced and broadened. Many a stout-hearted retainer came to the high-hall to see the rare wonder. Likewise the king himself came from the bower, guardian of the ring-hoard; the glorious one, renowned for his excellence, went with a great gathering, and his queen with him traversed the mead-path with a bevy of maids.

9. **melted away.** Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon dragons were gifted with the power of breathing out flames. On their death they shriveled up or melted. 15. **Heremod,** a Danish king who did evil to his people, and is in this poem used as a stock example of a bad king. The Anglo-Saxons always emphasize the ethical side of the story (see the passage covered by note on line 68). 40. **bower.** The unmarried warriors slept in the hall; the married warriors slept in the bower. Beowulf as a guest of honor was assigned a chamber in the bower after he had killed Grendel.

Hrothgar spake—he went to the hall, stood by the pillar, beheld the lofty roof adorned with gold and with the hand of Grendel: "For this sight may thanks straightway be given to the Almighty. Much have I endured of evil, sorrows from Grendel. Ever God can work wonder after wonder, the King of Glory! It was but now that I did not dare to expect relief ever from any of my woes, as long as the best of houses stood stained with sword-blood, a widely-known woe to each of the men who did not dare to hope that they for a long time could defend the tribal buildings from hostile ghosts and devils. Now has a warrior through the might of the Lord performed the deed which we all formerly might not contrive in our wisdom. Lo! if she yet lives, whoever of women bore this son after the manner of men, she may say that the Ancient of Days was gracious to her in her child-bearing. Now, Beowulf, I will love thee as a son, best of men, while thou livest; henceforth hold well our new relationship. There shall not be any lack to thee of the desirable things of this life in so far as I have power to grant them. Full often for less have I awarded to a lesser warrior an honorable gift, to a man weaker in strife. Thou hast performed such deeds that thy glory shall live for ever and ever. May Almighty God reward thee as he hath done until now."

Beowulf spake, the son of Ecgtheow: "We performed that conflict of strength with great good-will, and boldly ventured the strength of the unknown. I should have liked it better that thou mightest have seen the fiend himself in his trappings, weary to the point of death! I had intended to bind him quickly with a mighty grasp upon a slaughter-bed, so that he, because of my hand-grip, should lie in the throes of death, unless his body escaped. However, I could not cut him off from getting away, because the Lord did not permit it. I did not cling to the life-

68. **Ancient of Days,** God. 87. **in his trappings,** as he looked.

foe well enough; the fiend was too mighty in his movement. Nevertheless, he left behind his hand, his arm, and the shoulder as a hostage for his life to mark the trail. But the wretched creature will not obtain any comfort; none the longer shall the hated monster live, battered with crime, but him a wound has seized deeply in its dire grip, in its powerful bonds. In that condition shall this man, stained with crime, await the Great Judgment when the Radiant Judge shall pass sentence upon him."

Then was a certain man, the son of Ecglaf, more silent about boasting speeches concerning deeds of battle, since by the might of the earl the warriors were looking at the hand on the lofty roof, the fingers of the fiend—each one hooked forward, and each finger-nail most like steel, the hand-spurs of the heathen, the fearful claw of the battle-monster. Each man said that no hard thing, no sword however good, could touch him so as to injure the bloody battle-hand of the adversary.

Straightway the command was given that Heorot be put in order within. Many a man and woman prepared the wine-building, the guest-hall. Glittering-gold tapestry shone on the walls: many a wondrous scene for any man who cares to look at such things. The bright building had been mightily shattered within, though fastened with iron clamps; the hinges were sprung apart. Only the roof had escaped altogether sound, when the adversary, stained with deeds of crime, had turned in flight, despairing of his life. It is not easy to escape death—try it he who will—but compelled by Fate each soul-bearer of the children of men shall gain a place which has been prepared for him, where his body shall sleep fast upon a burial-bed after the banquet.

Then came the time and occasion that the son of Healfdane went to the hall. The king wished himself to partake of the banquet. I never heard of a greater gathering of people behaving themselves better in the presence of their giver of treasure. The prosperous ones sat them down on the benches, rejoiced at the feast, partook courteously of many a mead-cup. The stout-hearted kinsmen, Hrothgar and Hrothulf, were in the high-hall. Heorot was filled within with friends. Not yet had the princes of the Scyldings committed deeds of treachery.

The son of Healfdane gave to Beowulf a golden banner as a reward for victory, an adorned battle-banner, a helmet, a byrnie, and a famous treasure-sword; many saw them borne before the hero. Beowulf rose and received the pledge-cup; on this occasion he need not have felt shame before the warriors for the gifts. I have not heard of many mortal men giving to others in a more friendly fashion on the ale-bench four treasures. About the top of the helmet was a head-protector, wrapped with wires; it protected the crest from without so that the leavings of files, fire-hard, might not harm him when the shield-warrior should go against his enemies. Hrothgar, the protector of earls, bade them bring in upon the hall-floor beyond the barriers eight horses with gold-plated bridles. Upon one of them stood, glittering with treasures, a saddle adorned with jewels. It was the battle saddle of the king when he had wished to make sword-play. Never did the prowess of the renowned one fail in the forefront when the slain fell. And then to Beowulf did Hrothgar, the protector of the Ingwins, give possession of each and both, horses and weapons; he bade him to make good use of them. So, as a man ought, the famous prince, the hoard-guardian of heroes, paid for the battle-onsets with horses and treasure, that no man could blame him who said the truth according to what is right.

Moreover, to each of those on the mead-bench who with Beowulf, had

44. **compelled by Fate**, etc., another variation of the theme of Fate. Gray has expressed it best in "The Elegy," "The paths of glory lead but to the grave."

63. **treachery.** See note on line 2, page 13. 79. **leavings of files**, kenning for *sword*. 93. **Ingwins**, Danes.

taken the sea-road, the ruler of earls gave treasure, ancestral heirlooms, and bade his people pay with gold for that warrior whom Grendel formerly had killed wickedly, as he would have done to each of them at some future time had not a high God interposed Fate and the courage of Beowulf. The Lord ruled over all mankind then as he does now. Therefore understanding is everywhere best, forethought of heart. He shall live through much that is pleasant and unpleasant who here in these days of strife mingles with the world.

Song and the voice of joy mingled together in the presence of the world-leaders of the son of Healfdane. The harp-strings were swept; a lay was oft composed, when the bard of Hrothgar along the mead-bench proclaimed joy in the hall.

—Before the sons of Finn, when the sudden attack came on them, the hero of the Half-Danes, Hnaef of the Scyldings, had to fall upon a Frisian slaughter-field. Nor did Hildeburh have occasion to rejoice at the fidelity of the Eotens. Without any fault of her own was she deprived of her dear son and brother in the play of bucklers; they had fallen at the appointed time, wounded with the spear. She was a sorrowful lady. By no means without reason did the daughter of Hoc mourn for what was fated, when in the light of morning she saw her murdered kinsmen in the place where she had previously had the greatest joy in the world. The battle had swept away all the thanes of Finn, except only a few, so that he could not in the battle-place fight to a finish his conflict with Hengest. Nor might the woeful remnant on the other side by fighting rescue Hengest, the thane of their prince; therefore the Frisians offered them terms that they would make empty another floor for the Danes, a hall and a high-seat, and that the Danes would be allowed to possess half of it with the sons of the Eotens. Moreover, on the days when gifts were distributed, Finn, the son of Folcwalda, would honor the Danes, the troop of Hengest, would give them rings, costly treasures plated with gold, as well as he would honor in the beer-hall the tribe of the Frisians.

They plighted on both sides a fast peace-compact. Finn declared to Hengest strongly and incontestably with oaths that he would honor and protect the woeful remnant of Hengest's troop in accordance with the judgment of the wise men, so that no man by word or deed should break the treaty, or with envious purpose ever mention it, though the troop of Hengest were indeed following as ring-giver the murderer of their prince, as they were forced to do, since they had been deprived of their leader. Moreover, if any one of the Frisians in bold speech should call to mind this murder-hate, then the edge of the sword was straightway to avenge it.

The oath was performed, and costly gold was brought up from the hoard. Hnaef, the best war-leader of the Army-Scyldings, was prepared for the bale-fire. Upon the pyre could easily be seen the blood-stained byrnie, the swine of gold, the boar iron-hard, and many

22. **Before the sons of Finn**, etc. This recital is a rapid summary of an episode in a typical blood-feud which existed between Finn, king of the Frisian tribe, and Hnaef, leader of the Hocings, a half Danish tribe. Finn had married Hildeburh, sister of Hnaef, possibly to end the feud. However, in some way the feud broke out again, and Hnaef was slain in Finn's hall. The battle which ensued became a deadlock, so that a truce was concluded between Finn and Hengest, Hnaef's successor, whereby the Hocings were to enter Finn's service and receive equal rewards with the Frisians. After one winter the feud broke out again, Finn and his tribe were slaughtered, and the Hocings bore home the plunder and the queen. We should notice that this feud was between relatives by marriage, for frequently marriage alliances were used with a hope that they might end feuds. Rarely, if ever, were they successful. In the passage referred to in note on line 49, page 37, Beowulf prophesies to Hygelac the unfortunate outcome of the marriage of Hrothgar's daughter Freawaru with Ingeld, king of the Heathobards, as a means of healing a similar blood-feud. These feuds are one of the characteristic features of Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon legends. The tradition may also be traced in the popular ballads which treat of domestic and tribal feuds. 27. **Eotens**, here, possibly a tribe owing allegiance to Finn, who, at his command, fell upon Hnaef and the Hocings. Cf. the fate of the sons of Usnach in *Deirdre* (page 67, line 81). 33. **daughter of Hoc**, Hildeburh.

67. **troop of Hengest.** Such warrior bands pledged themselves neither to desert their king nor to survive him if he fell in battle. Cf. the action of the West Saxon king's troop as narrated in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* for the year 755 A.D. (page II-284, lines 18 ff.). Hengest's troop did not fulfill their pledge. 72. **call to mind.** Many a blood-feud was renewed by a taunting speech, as Beowulf shows in the passage referred to in note on line 49, page 37. 78. **bale-fire.** See note on line 11, page 12. 79. **Upon the pyre**, etc. Compare this cremation with that of Shelley as described by Trelawny in his *Recollections* (page II-389).

a warrior done to death by wounds; many a one had fallen in the slaughter. Hildeburh commanded that upon the pyre of Hnaef her own son should be committed to the flame, and his mortal frame consumed by the bale-fire. The wretched lady wept at his side and uttered her sorrow in dirges. Hnaef, warrior of many battles, was lifted upon the pyre. The mightiest of slaughter-fires rose to the clouds; it roared in front of the grave-mound. The heads melted, the wound-gates burst open, when the blood spurted out by reason of the deadly corpse-bite. The flames swallowed them all, greediest of spirits—all those whom the conflict had taken away from both peoples; their fame had departed.

The warriors then turned away from the pyre, bereft of their friends, to survey in Friesland their stockade and high-hall. Hengest throughout a slaughter-stained winter lived with Finn quite unitedly; he remembered his home, though he could not drive out to sea his ring-necked ship—the sea swelled with storm, it fought against the wind; winter locked the waves in a continuous ice-bound—until a second year came into the courts—as it yet does to those who continually watch the signs of the seasons—the wondrous-bright weather.

Then was winter shaken; fair was the bosom of the earth. The exile Hengest felt a desire to go away from the Frisian courts; but he thought more strongly of revenge for harm done than he did of the sea-voyage, if perchance he might bring about a wrathful conflict that therein he might not forget the son of the Eotens. So he did not refuse the way of the world, when the son of Hunlaf placed upon his knees the battle-gleam, the best of swords. Its edges were well known among the Eotens.

32. **signs of the seasons.** Cf. the conclusion to Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind": "O wind, if Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?" 42. **son of the Eotens,** probably Hnaef. 43. **he did not refuse the way of the world,** an Anglo-Saxon understatement either for death or for doing one's duty as prescribed by custom. Here it probably means that one of Hengest's followers placed upon his knees the sword of their slaughtered chief, Hnaef, and advised him to use it in leading an attack upon their enemies.

Likewise dire sword-slaughter befell the stout-hearted Finn in his own home, after Guthlaf and Oslaf recalled the sorrow of the grim attack which had taken place after the sea-voyage; they charged him with their many woes. The raging spirit might no longer be restrained in their breasts. The hall became covered with the bodies of adversaries. Likewise was Finn slain, the king among his troop, and his queen seized. The warriors of the Scyldings bore to the ship all the household property of the earth-king, whatever they could find of jewels and cunningly-adorned gems in the stockade of Finn. They bore on the sea voyage the noble wife to the Danes; they led her back to their people.—

The song was sung, the lay of the gleeman. The noise of revelry arose once more; the sound of conversation grew clearer. Cup-bearers poured wine from wondrous beakers. Then came Wealhtheow, adorned with a golden necklace, to where the two good men sat, the uncle and the nephew. Their relationship still was peaceful, each one true to the other. Unferth, the spokesman, likewise sat at the feet of the lord of the Scyldings. Everybody trusted in his valor, in his great courage of mind, although he had not been steadfast to his kinsmen in the play of the swords.

The lady of the Scyldings spake: "Receive this cup, my dear lord, giver of treasure! Be thou in happiness, golden friend of men, and speak to the Geats with mild words as a man ought! Be gracious to the Geats, mindful of gifts; from near and far thou now hast thy desire. They tell me that thou hast adopted for thy son Beowulf, the war-hero. Heorot is cleansed, the bright ring-hall; enjoy, while thou mayest, many rewards, and leave to thy sons people and realm, when thou shalt at the appointed time fare forth to meet thy doom. I know that my gracious Hrothulf will protect the young men, if thou, dear friend of the Scyldings,

50. **Guthlaf and Oslaf,** two of Hengest's warriors. 74. **the uncle and the nephew,** Hrothulf and Hrethric.

shalt leave this world before he does. I expect that he will repay with good our children, if he calls to mind all those things which we have done out of kindness for his pleasure and honor when he was formerly a child."

She turned then along the bench to where her sons were, Hrethric and Hrothmund, and the sons of the warriors, the troop of young men together. Beowulf, the excellent hero of the Geats, sat between them both. To him was the cup borne and a friendly invitation offered with words, and wound-gold graciously proffered: two arm-bracelets, armor, and ring-mail, the mightiest of necklaces of which I ever heard on earth. I never heard of a better hoard-treasure of heroes under the heavens since Hama bore away to the bright stronghold the necklace of the Brosings, the jewel and the treasure; he fled the cunning hate of Eormenric; he chose eternal counsel. This necklace, Hygelac of the Geats, the nephew of Swerting, had worn on the last time, when he under his banner had defended his treasure and war-plunder. Fate swept him away, when, in his pride, he suffered woes and strife at the hands of the Frisians; the mighty prince had borne over the cup of the waves the treasure; he fell under his shield. The life of the king passed into the power of the Franks, as well as the coats-of-mail and the necklace; unvaliant war-wolves robbed his corpse after the battle-slaughter; the corpses of the Geats covered the field.

The hall received the sound. Wealhtheow spake in the presence of the company: "Enjoy this necklace, dear Beowulf, O young man; make use of this armor, treasure of the people, and thrive well; make known thy might, and be to these young men mindful of counsel; I will reward thee. Thou hast brought it about that far and near for all time to come men shall honor thee, even as far as the sea encompasses the windy walls of the earth. Be thou, while thou livest, prosperous, O prince; use well these courtly treasures. Be thou to my sons friendly in deeds, O joyous feaster; here every earl is true to the other, kindly in mind, faithful to his lord; the thanes are at peace, the people all are ready. All ye warriors who have drunk deep do as I command."

She went then to her seat. It was the choicest of banquets. The men drank wine; they did not know what grim fate was to come to many an earl. After evening had come, and Hrothgar had departed to his chamber, the mighty one to rest, a great group of earls guarded the building as they had often done. They cleared the benchboards and spread throughout the hall beds and bolsters. One of the revelers, eager, yet doomed, lay down upon the bed-rest. They set above their heads the battle-shields, the bright wooden-bucklers. On the bench over each warrior might easily be seen the high battle-helm, the ringed coat-of-mail, the strong war-sword. It was their rule always to be ready for war, either at home or on the foray; even at such times as need came upon their lord. That was a good troop!

PART II

The Battle with Grendel's Mother

They sank then to sleep. One sore paid for his evening-rest, as had happened full often since the time when Grendel commenced haunting the gold-hall, waging evil, until he got his end, death in consequence of his crimes. Soon it became clearly manifested to

20. **Hama**, a legendary opponent of Eormenric. 21. **necklace.** In Scandinavian mythology this necklace belonged to Freyja, the goddess of beauty. 23. **Eormenric**, a king of the Goths notorious for his cruelty. When the Huns broke up his kingdom, in 375 A.D., he killed himself. His connection with the Brosing necklace is unknown. 24. **chose eternal counsel**, kenning for *died*. 36. **war-wolves**, kenning for *warriors*. 37. **battle-slaughter.** This is the raid of Hygelac upon the Frisian coast, between 512-520 A.D., which is the historical basis of the poem. A fuller account is given in Part IV of this poem (see note on line 83, page 41).

73. **bed-rest**, a bench which probably ran the entire length of each side of the hall and served as a combination bench and bed for the warriors. 83. **They sank then to sleep.** This paragraph summarizes the important features of the first part. **One**, Aeschere; another example of foreboding.

men that an avenger still lived after the enemy, for a long time after the war-sorrow, the mother of Grendel, a monster in woman's form. She remembered her misery, since it was her lot to inhabit the terrible tarn, the cold streams, ever since Cain became the murderer of his only brother, his kinsman on his father's side. He had departed an outlaw, marked with murder, to escape the joy of mankind; he inhabited the waste places. From him sprang most of the demons sent by Fate; one of these was Grendel, the hateful monster, who in Heorot had found a man awake waiting for battle on the occasion when the adversary came to grips with him. Yet Beowulf remembered the strength of his might, the priceless gift which God had given him; and he trusted in the protection of the Lord for consolation and aid. Thus he overcame the fiend; he vanquished the hell-sprite. Grendel, the enemy of mankind, departed in humiliation, deprived of joy, to find the abode of the dead. But his mother, in her turn, greedy and fierce of heart, wished to perform the sorrowful journey to avenge the death of her son.

She came to Heorot where the Ring-Danes slept throughout that hall. Immediately there became manifest to the earls an overturn of fortune, when Grendel's mother broke into the hall. The terror was just so much the less as is the might of a woman, the war-terror of a female, in comparison with that of a warrior, when the hilt-bound sword, hammer-forged, the sword glittering with blood, face to face strikes the boar over the helmet, courageous against swords.

Then in the hall was the hard sword drawn from over the benches; many a wide buckler lifted fast in the hands. No warrior thought of helmet or wide byrnie when the terror came upon him. She was in haste; as soon as she was discovered she wanted to escape and save her life. Quickly she seized fast one of the warriors when she went back to the fen. He was to Hrothgar the dearest of companions between the two seas, a mighty warrior in raids, whom she tore away from his bed, the renowned man. Beowulf was not there, for another lodging had been assigned to the famous Geat immediately after the gift-giving. Clamor arose in Heorot. She, in the midst of slaughter-gore, took away the famous hand. Care was renewed among the dwellings of the Danes. That was no fair bargain that they were forced to make on both sides for the lives of their dear ones. The wise king, the snow-haired battle-warrior, was sad in mind when he knew that the lordly thane was unliving, that his dearest friend was dead.

Straightway from the bower was Beowulf fetched, the man rich in victory. At the break of day he went with his earls, the noble champion in the midst of companions, to where the wise ruler awaited to see if the Almighty would ever bring an exchange for the tidings of woe. Along the hall-floor with his followers came the man famous in war—the hall resounded—in order that he might greet the wise man with words, the dear lord of the Ingwins. He asked him according to courteous custom whether his night's rest had been agreeable.

Hrothgar spake, the protector of the Scyldings: "Ask not after joy! Sorrow is renewed to the people of the Danes. Dead is Aeschere, the oldest brother of Yrmenlaf, my secret councilor and adviser, a man who stood with me shoulder to shoulder when we two in the battle guarded our heads, when armor crashed and boar-helmets rattled. Thus ought an earl to be, an excellent warrior, even as Aeschere was! A wandering slaughter-spirit became his murderer in Heorot. I do not know whither the horrible creature, rejoicing in carrion, took the return journey, exulting in her kill. However, she avenged the feud in which thou yesternight didst kill Grendel violently by hard gripping of hands, because he too long diminished and destroyed my people. He fell in battle,

56. **renowned man**, Aeschere. 85. **agreeable**, unintentional irony, for Beowulf does not know what has happened.

having forfeited his life, and now another mighty evildoer has come; she wants to avenge her son. Thou hast established a far-reaching feud, as it may well seem to many a thane who for the ring-giver will grieve in mind, suffer hard woe of heart. Now that hand lies still which was accustomed to give every good thing.

10 "I have heard the land-dwellers, my people, hall-rulers, say that they have seen two such mighty marsh-stalkers roaming the moors, spirits from another world. One of them, as nearly as they could make out, had the likeness of a woman; the other misshapen creature trod the tracks of exile in the form of a man, except that he was mightier in stature than any man. Him in days 20 gone by the country-folk named Grendel; they knew of no father, or whether he was ever father of lurking ghost-monsters.

"They a secret land inhabit, the wolf-slopes, the windy sea-crags, the dangerous fen-paths, where the mountain stream plunges down under the misty headlands, a torrent under the earth. The pool is not farther away from here 30 than a mile; over it lean frost-covered trees; the wood, fast on its roots, overshadows the water. There any night can a dreadful portent be seen—fire flickering on the flood. There is no man living among the children of men so wise as to know the bottom of that tarn. Though the hart when pressed by hounds, the deer strong in his antlers, seeks that deep wood when pursued 40 from afar, sooner will he give up his life on its shore than risk death in the pool. It is not a pleasant place. Thence the wave-surges tower up black toward the clouds, when the wind stirs up hostile storms until the air darkens, and the clouds weep.

"Now again is our help dependent upon thee alone! The terrible place as yet thou dost not know, where thou canst find the sinful creature. Seek it, 50 if thou darest. I will repay thee with ancient treasure for the feud, as I formerly did with wound-gold, if thou dost succeed."

Beowulf spake, the son of Ecgtheow: "Do not sorrow, O wise man! It is better for a man to avenge a friend than to mourn over-much. Each of us must expect death; therefore let him who may, perform deeds of glory before 60 death comes! Afterwards that is the best reward for a dead man. Arise, ruler of this realm! Let us go forth at once to scan the tracks of Grendel's kin. I promise thee he shall not lose himself in any protecting place, neither in the embrace of the earth, nor in the mountain-wood, nor in the bottom of the ocean, let him go where he will. On this day do thou have patience with 70 each of thy woes. as I expect patience from thee!"

The old man leaped up. The mighty ruler thanked God for what the warrior had spoken. Straightway was the horse of Hrothgar bridled, the horse with its braided mane. The wise prince rode in state; a troop of shield-bearers marched behind him. The tracks were easily followed along the forest paths, 80 where she had gone over the ground and hastened straight over the misty moor, bearing the dead body of the best of kinsmen-thanes of those who guarded his homestead for Hrothgar. The son of the prince traversed the steep stone slopes, the narrow path, the difficult wood-track, the unknown trail, and the steep sea-crags, which are the homes of many sea-monsters. He, one of a 90 few, went before the wise man to scout

10. **I have heard,** etc. This paragraph illustrates the Anglo-Saxon attitude toward nature. It is fearful, but it is also beautiful. The feeling continues throughout English and American literature. Note the descriptions of the seasons in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (page 120, lines 68 ff.), Mrs. Rowlandson's *Narrative* (page II-349), Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (page 261), Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" (page 452), and such war poems as those of Siegfried Sassoon and W. W. Gibson (pages 614 ff. and 622). 24. **secret land,** etc. How Coleridge would have enjoyed this supernatural and horrible view of nature!

56. **Do not sorrow . . . . dead man.** This is the quintessence of the Anglo-Saxon's attitude toward life and death, as well as his code of honor. Compare with it subsequent thoughts on these subjects given in this book. [See Kipling's "The White Man's Burden" (page 611) and Alan Seeger's "I Have a Rendezvous with Death" (page 692) as two of the latest expressions of these thoughts. 64. **Grendel's kin.** Beowulf does not learn of Grendel's death until he visits the lair (page 32), but at present he feels sure that the avenger must be related to Grendel, though what manner of creature it is he does not know until Hrothgar tells what his people have seen.

along the plain until he suddenly came upon the mountain trees leaning over the gray cliff, the joyless wood. The water lay under it bloody and troubled. To all the Danes, the friends of the Scyldings, was there grief of mind, suffering and distress to many a thane and earl, when they found the head of Aeschere upon the sea-cliff.

10 The flood boiled with hot gore; the people saw it. At times the horn blew a fierce war-song. All the troop sat down. They saw upon the water many of the dragon-kind, strange sea-snakes making trial of the sea-waves. Likewise along the crag-slopes sea-monsters were lying, who often in the morning made a sorrow-causing journey on the sail-road—sea-snakes and fearful 20 monsters. They slipped away into the water, bitter and swollen with anger, when they heard the sound of the horn. The prince of the Geats deprived one of these of life by means of an arrow, cut it off from the strife, when the hard army-arrow pierced its life. On the waves the beast was the slower for swimming because death had taken it. Straightway it was hard 30 pressed on the waves with boar-spears and sword-hooks, deprived of its power of doing harm. The wonderful wave-tosser was pulled up on the cliff. The men looked at the horrible creature.

Beowulf armed himself in the trappings of an earl; not at all did he take thought of his life. He put on his war-byrnie, hand-woven, broad, and glittering with cunning workmanship; 40 it was to make trial of the sea and protect the bone-covering so that no battle-grip might harm his heart, nor the hostile attack of an angry adversary scathe his life. The white helmet protected his head; it was to disturb the bottom of the tarn, to visit the surge of the sound. It was decked with treasure, surrounded with ornamental chains, which in days of yore the smith of weap-50 ons had wonderfully adorned, had beset with boar-images, so that no sword or slaughter-knife could cut into it. Not the smallest of strength-aids was that which the spokesman of Hrothgar lent Beowulf in his need. The name of the hilted sword was Hrunting, and it was preëminent among ancient treasures. The sword was of iron and glittered with poison-twigs, hardened by battle-blood. Never had it failed any man in battle 60 of those who had grasped it with their hands, who had ventured the fearful war-journey the battle-gathering of foes. This would not be the first time that it had accomplished a deed of strength. To be sure, Unferth, the son of Ecglaf, mighty in valor, did not recall at this time, when he lent his weapon to a better warrior, what he had said formerly when drunk with 70 wine. He did not himself dare under the tumult of the waves to risk his life, to accomplish the heroic deed. Thereby was he deprived of such glory as comes from deeds of strength. The other man was not so, as he had prepared himself for deeds of war.

Beowulf spake, the son of Ecgtheow: "Bethink thee now, O famous son of Healfdane, wise prince, as I am pre- 80 pared for the journey, O gold-friend of men, what we two formerly spake. If I for thy need should be deprived of my life, be thou to me ever, even though dead, in the place of a father. Be thou protector of my kinsmen-thanes, if death take me! Likewise send to Hygelac, O Hrothgar, those gifts which thou hast given to me. The lord of the Geats, the son of Hrethel, may perceive 90 by the gold, when he surveys the treasure, that I found most happily a good giver of rings, that I enjoyed him while I might; and do thou give Unferth, the well-known man, the ancient heirloom, the wondrous hard wave-sword. I shall perform a deed of glory with Hrunting, or else death will take me."

After these words the prince of the Weder-Geats hastened away in his 100 might, and did not stay for an answer. The tarn-surge received the battle-

19. **fearful monsters.** Compare Coleridge's description of the water-snakes in Part IV of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (page 265). 27. **was the slower,** etc., primitive irony. 41. **bone-covering,** body.

59. **poison-twigs.** Damascened steel has a wavy pattern, which the Scandinavians believed to be due to charms or poison; hence the epithet *snake-adorned*, page 33, line 53.

prince. It was quite a long time before he could see the bottom of the pool. Soon she found out, she who had ruled, sword-greedy and grim, the domain of the flood for a hundred half-years, that some man had come from above into the realm of other-world monsters. She pounced on him and seized the battle-warrior in her horrible grip. Yet she could not injure his sound body, for the byrnie so protected it from without that she might not get at the warrior; the well-locked limb-sark protected him from the grip of the enemy. The sea-wolf, when she reached the bottom, bore the prince in his ring-mail to her lair. He might not use his weapons, though he was courageous, for many marvelous monsters tormented him in the flood. Many a sea-beast with battle-tusks tried to rip through his war-armor; they harassed the champion.

At length the earl perceived that he was in some kind of lair near the bottom of the pool, where no water might harm him; nor did the fearful grip of the flood touch him in the lofty cave; he saw fire-light shining brightly, a brilliant gleam. Then the good man attacked the ground-wolf, the mighty sea-hag. He made a terrific attack with his battle-sword. He did not withhold his hand, but the ring-adorned sword sang greedily upon her head a battle-song. Then the wanderer found that the battle-gleam did not bite or harm the life, for the sword failed the prince at his need. Formerly it had endured many a hand-to-hand fight and had often cut in two a helmet, the war-armor of the doomed one. This was the first time that its glory failed the dear weapon.

Once again was Beowulf determined in mind; he was not slow of strength; the son of Hygelac was mindful of glory. The warrior in his wrath cast aside the sword bound with wondrous ring-ornaments, so that it lay on the ground strong and steel-edged. He trusted in his strength and in the might of his hand-grip. So ought a man to do when he in battle expects to get everlasting praise; he should not care for his life. The prince of the War-Geats seized the mother of Grendel by the shoulder—not at all did he worry about the encounter; the man, courageous in battle, seized the life-enemy, because he was angry, and she fell on the ground. But she straightway repaid him for his fierce grip and seized upon him in turn. The strongest of men, now weary in mind, stumbled and fell. The hall-guest leaped upon him and drew her short-sword, broad and brown-edged; she wanted to avenge her child, her only son. Upon his shoulders lay the woven breast-byrnie that protected his life and withstood entrance of spear and sword. The son of Ecgtheow would have died under the spacious earth, the champion of the Geats, had not his war-byrnie, his hard battle-net, helped him, and had not Holy God brought about victory in battle, the Wise Lord. The ruler of the heavens easily decided it aright. Afterwards Beowulf stood up.

He saw among the weapons a sword rich in victory, an ancient sword of the giants with mighty edges, a weapon to be held in honor. It was the choicest of weapons, except that it was larger than any other man could bear to the battle-play; excellent and splendid, it was the work of giants. The bold warrior of the Scyldings, fierce and battle-grim, seized the sword by its ringed hilt, drew the ring-sword, not caring for his life, and smote with anger so that the courageous one struck her on the neck and broke the bone-ring; the sword went completely through the doomed flesh-cloak. She fell to the ground. The

7. **realm of other-world monsters.** Both Grendel's lair and his mother's actions in this passage are characteristic of sea otters. The lair is above water in the bank of the pool, but its entrance is under water. Whenever any animal swims in the pool, the water at the entrance of the cave is disturbed, and the inhabitant of the lair slips into the pool, seizes the invader, and carries it to the lair, where it is devoured. This is the unfulfilled procedure of Grendel's mother with Beowulf. 42. **dear weapon.** See note on line 102, page 21.

65. **short-sword.** She apparently carried a cutlass or dagger on a lanyard about her neck. 92. **sword.** This sword possessed more magic power than either Grendel or his mother—a good reason why both kept it in their lair. The Anglo-Saxons attributed to giants of the first age of the world whatever evidences of civilization, such as Roman roads and forts, mighty swords, and artistic carving of all sorts, they could not understand (see line 28, page 33, and the note on line 59, page 30; likewise, line 34, page 46, and its note).

sword was bloody. The man rejoiced in his work. The fire-light gleamed; it leaped from within just as brightly as from heaven shines the candle of the skies. Beowulf looked through the lair. As he moved along the hall, the thane of Hygelac grasped the tough weapon by the hilt. He was angry and determined in heart. The sword was not held feebly by the battle-warrior, for he intended at once to repay Grendel for the many attacks which he had made upon the West-Danes much oftener than that time when he had slain the hearth-companions of Hrothgar in their slumber, had devoured in their sleep fifteen men of the Danes, and had borne away just as many others—a fearful booty. Beowulf, the fierce champion, had so paid him back that he now saw, lying on his bed, the war-weary Grendel, deprived of his life, injured as he had previously been in battle at Heorot. The corpse gaped wide open, when Grendel after death suffered the fierce sword-blow, and Beowulf cut off his head.

Soon the mighty men who looked with Hrothgar upon the flood perceived that the wave-surge of the pool was disturbed and gleamed with blood. The gray-haired men spake together about the hero; they did not believe that the prince would return to the famous ruler, exulting in victory, since it seemed to many that the sea-wolf had destroyed him. Afternoon came. Not at all did the bold Scyldings depart for Heorot, but Hrothgar, the gold-friend of men, went home. The strangers sat sick in mind and stared at the pool; they wished, but did not expect, that they should see their dear lord himself.

Then the battle-sword began to dwindle into icicles of steel because of the blood of the monster. It was a wonderful sight when it had all melted, most like ice when the Father loosens the bolts of the frost and unbinds the ropes of the whirlpool, He who has control of times and seasons. He is the true God. The prince of the Weder-Geats did not take in this dwelling more of treasure-possessions, though he saw many there, except the head and the hilt together, a glittering booty. The shimmering-marked sword had melted because the blood of the poisonous other-world spirit who died in the lair was so hot. Soon he who had endured conflict, the war-terror of foes, was in the sound and dived up through the water. The wave-surge was completely purified, as well as the mighty dwelling where the other-world spirit gave up its life-days and this flitting world.

The protector of seamen, strong-minded in swimming, came ashore. He rejoiced at the sea-booty, at the mighty burden which he had with him. The mighty troop of thanes went to meet him. They thanked God; they rejoiced for their prince that they might see him safe and sound. Then from the valiant man were helmet and byrnie quickly loosened. The pool lay stagnant; the water under the clouds glittered with slaughter-gore.

Straightway they went back again along the footpaths rejoicing in heart. They traversed the earth-roads, the well-known ways. The royally-bold men bore with difficulty the head from the sea-cliff. Four men could scarcely bear upon a slaughter-spear the head of Grendel, but presently the fourteen bold, warlike Geats came to the hall. The brave lord of men with his troop traversed the mead-plain. The chief of thanes came in, the deed-bold man adorned with glory, the battle-famed warrior, to greet Hrothgar. By the hair was borne in on the floor the head of Grendel where the men were drinking; the fearful portent was placed before the earls and the queen. The men looked at the wondrous sight.

Beowulf spake, the son of Ecgtheow: "Lo! son of Healfdane, prince of the Scyldings, we have brought with joy from the sea-encounter this token of glory. I with difficulty survived with

2. **fire-light.** The supernatural gleam of light is more characteristic of Celtic than of Anglo-Saxon literature. In Celtic sagas there are several examples of fire blazing from the head of the hero or heroine in emotional crises. 46. **blood of the monster.** Such blood was considered by both Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian tribes to have poisonous or magic powers. In this case it melts the sword. Cf. *Christabel*, page 177, line 158, where the fire starts up when the witch Geraldine passes by.

my life the battle under the water, ventured the difficult deed, was almost deprived of success in battle, had not God protected me. I could not do anything with Hrunting in battle, though the weapon is a good one, but the Lord of Men granted to me that I saw hanging on the wall a huge, beautiful, and ancient sword—He most often is accustomed to guide those who are deprived of their friends; that weapon I drew. I slew in the strife, since luck came to me, the guardian of the lair. The sword, often brandished in battle, was consumed as the blood spattered on it, hottest of battle-gore. I bore thence from the monster the hilt; I avenged the deeds of crime, the slaughter-quell of the Danes, as it was fated. I promised thee that thou in Heorot shouldst sleep with thy troop of thanes free from sorrow; and so may each of thy thanes and people sleep, both young and old, that thou needest not fear for them, O lord of the Scyldings, life-slaughter of earls from one quarter, as thou formerly didst."

Then the golden hilt, the ancient work of giants, was given into the hand of the aged warrior, the hoary leader in battle. After the fall of the fiends it came into the possession of the lord of the Danes—the work of wondrous smiths, when the fierce-hearted man, the adversary of God, guilty of murder, departed from this world and his mother as well—into the power of the best of world-kings who divide treasure between the two seas on Skåne.

Hrothgar spake; he looked at the hilt, the ancient heirloom on which was written the beginning of an old strife, when the flood, the rushing ocean, slew the tribe of giants. They bore themselves overweeningly—their race was hostile to the Eternal Lord, but the Ruler through the surge of water gave them their final reward. So was it carved on this sword-guard of bright gold in rune-staves, was set down and made manifest for whom the sword was first made, choicest of weapons with the wreathed-hilt and blade snake-adorned. The wise son of Healfdane spake; the others remained silent: "Lo! He may well say who performeth truth and right among the people, ancient guardian of his country as far back as his remembrance reaches, that this earl was born to excel! Beloved Beowulf, thy glory is lifted up throughout the wide ways of every people. Thou dost hold thy strength modestly in the prudence of thy mind. I shall fulfill my friendship with thee exactly as we spake in former time. Thou shalt be an everlasting consolation to thy people, a help for heroes.

"Heremod was not so to the sons of Ecgwela, to the Honor-Scyldings. He did not develop for their pleasure, but for a slaughter-fall and death-quell to the people of the Danes. Swollen with pride, he killed his table-companions and bosom-friends, until the famous prince departed from the joys of man an exile, though mighty God had advanced him in the glories of strength and might and had placed him ahead of all men. However, in his mind grew blood-fierce thoughts; not at all did he give to the Danes rings as was right; he lived joyless and suffered distress in combat, a long-enduring national evil. Profit thou by his example; distinguish the proper qualities of a man! I, wise in winters, have prepared for thee these precepts.

"It is wonderful to relate how Almighty God in his wisdom distributes to mankind discretion, country, and rule. He rules over all. At times He allows the purposes of a man of noble kind to turn to delight. He gives him an ancestral home in the beautiful earth, a protecting stronghold of man; he brings into his subjection regions of the earth, a wide kingdom, so that he himself in his folly cannot forecast the end. He remains in prosperity; nothing annoys him—neither sickness, nor age, nor foe-sorrow darkens his mind; no strife anywhere causes sword-hate to appear, but for him the world turns

39. **Skåne**, lower Sweden. 43. **the flood**, a reference to the Biblical flood (Genesis vi-vii). 50. **rune-staves**, secret magic writing.

53. **snake-adorned.** See note on line 59, page 30. 68. **Heremod.** See note on line 15, page 23. 87 ff. **wonderful to relate**, etc. Now follows the most important reflection upon life in *Beowulf*.

at his pleasure—he does not know the worst—until within him overweening pride grows and spreads itself. Then conscience sleeps, the guardian of the soul; that sleep is too deep, bound with afflictions; the slayer is very near who shooteth maliciously an arrow from the bow. Then he is struck in his mind under his helmet by the bitter shaft—he knows no protection—by the wondrous evil commands of the accursed spirit. He fancies too little that which he has long possessed; hostile in mind he becomes covetous; not at all does he proudly give gold-plated rings; he forgets God's destiny for him, and is careless of that share of honor which God, the Ruler of Glory, formerly gave to him. In the end it often happens that his mortal body sinks and falls doomed. Another one without mourning divides the ancient treasures of the earl and has no thought of fear. Guard thyself against baleful envy, dear Beowulf, best of men, and choose the better counsel, which is eternal! Do not incline to over-much pride, O famous warrior! Now for a while thy fame shall endure; but the time will soon come when sickness or sword shall bereave thee of thy might, or the snatch of the fire, or the surge of the flood, or the gripping of the sword, or the flight of the spear, or dire age, or else the light of the eye shall fail and darken; presently, O just man, death will overcome thee.

"Even so I for a hundred half-years have ruled under the clouds the Ring-Danes. I have secured my purpose by valor over many a nation throughout this earth by ash-spears and swords, so that I did not reckon with any enemy under the circuit of the sky. Then, lo! to me in my country a change of fortune came, distress after joy, since Grendel, the ancient adversary, became my trespasser. Because of him I continually bore persecution and mighty sorrow of heart. For this may thanks be given to the Creator, the Eternal Judge, that I have lived long enough to look with these eyes upon the sword, bloody after the completion of the ancient strife! Go now to thy seat; enjoy the banquet adorned with might; between us shall a great amount of treasure be in common when morning comes."

The Geat rejoiced in mind; he went straightway to the seat as the wise man commanded. As before, the hall had been prepared suitably anew for the troop courageously strong. The helmet of night grew dark over the noble warriors. The troop arose; the white-haired, aged Scylding wished to take his rest. To Beowulf, the brave shield-warrior of the Geats, there was also an immeasurable desire for sleep. Soon a hall-thane showed the way to him who had come from afar, now weary of his expedition, a thane who out of courtesy attended to all the needs of Beowulf, and whatever the warrior-sailors needed in those days. The great-hearted man took his rest. The hall towered spacious and gold-adorned. The guests slept within, until the black raven, blithe-hearted, announced the joy of heaven.

Then came the bright gleam hurrying after the darkness. The warriors hastened, for the renowned ones were eager again to return to their people; the bold-minded man wished far thence to revisit his ship. The brave-hearted one commanded them to bear Hrunting to Unferth, the son of Ecglaf, to take to him his sword, the precious weapon. Beowulf thanked him for the loan and said that he deemed the battle-friend to be a good one, mighty in war. Not at all did he with words blame the edge of the sword. He was a magnanimous man.

And now the warriors were ready for their journey, arrayed in their equipment. The dear prince went to the throne of the Danes where that other one sat, the battle-bold hero, and greeted Hrothgar.

Beowulf spake, the son of Ecgtheow: "Now we sea-farers, come from afar, desire to say that we are about to return to Hygelac. We were well entertained here; thou hast treated us excellently. If I while on earth may gain any more of the love of thy heart, O ruler of men, than I have yet gained by deeds of

war, I shall straightway be ready. If I shall ever learn, over the expanse of the flood, that neighbors oppress thee, as hostile ones did a while back, I shall bring a thousand thanes to thy assistance. I know that Hygelac, lord of the Geats, though he be young, the guardian of the people, will bring it about by words and deeds that I may honor thee well and bear to thy assistance the spear-shaft, a mighty aid when there is need to thee of men. If Hrethric, thy princely son, betakes him to the court of the Geats, he shall there find friends. Distant lands are best sought by a man who is self-reliant."

Hrothgar spake to him in answer: "The wise Lord sent these words into thy bosom. Never heard I so young a man speak more wisely in life. Thou art strong of might and mature of mind, wise of speech. I expect if it happens that the spear shall take the son of Hrethel, thy prince, the guardian of the people, in bloody-grim battle, sickness, or iron, and thou hast thy life still, that the Sea-Geats will not have any better king to choose as treasure-guard of heroes, if thou thyself wilt assume the rule of the kingdom. The longer I have known thee the better have I loved thy courage, dear Beowulf. Thou hast brought it about that between the people of the Geats and the Spear-Danes there shall be a common peace, a rest from strife, from the malicious enmity which they formerly endured; there shall be common gifts while I rule over this mighty kingdom. Many shall visit the other nation with good wishes over the bath of the sea-gull. The ring-necked ship shall bring over the sea presents and love-tokens. I know the people will remain firm both toward foe and toward friend, in every respect blameless, in the old fashion."

Then the protector of earls, the son of Healfdane, gave to him twelve treasures. He commanded him with these gifts to revisit in health his dear prince, and soon to come again. The king, royal of lineage, the prince of the Scyldings, kissed the best of thanes and threw his arms about his neck. Tears fell from the white-haired man. To him were two expectations, but of one more than the other, that they would never see each other again, mighty in council. The man was so dear to him that he could not restrain the surge of emotion in his bosom, but fast in the bonds of his mind he cherished a secret longing for the dear warrior which burned in his blood.

Then from him departed Beowulf, the gold-proud battle-warrior, and trod the grassy plain, exulting in his treasure. The sea-going ship, which rode at anchor, awaited its owner. On the way the gifts of Hrothgar were often praised. He was a king in every way blameless, until age took from him the joy of strength, as it has from many a man.

29. **assume the rule.** This actually happened after the deaths of Hygelac and Hrethric.

PART III

The Return of Beowulf to the Land of the Geats

Came then to the sea the group of young warriors; they wore locked, ring-netted body-sarks. The coast-guard perceived the approach of the earls, as he had done before. With no hostile purpose did he hail the guests from the cliff-cape, but hastened toward them. He said, as they fared toward the ship, that the warriors, bright in armor, would be welcome to the people of the Weders. On the sand the sea-wide ship was laden with horses and treasures; the mast towered over the treasure-hoard of Hrothgar. Beowulf gave to the boat-guard a sword adorned with gold that he might afterwards be held in greater worth upon the mead-bench because of the treasure, the ancient heirloom.

The ship forged on, stirring up the waters of the deep; it departed from the land of the Danes. Upon the mast was a sea-garment, a sail fastened with rope. The wooden ship thundered through the water; nor on that occasion did the wind hinder on the waves the wave-floater from its journey. The sea-goer swept on, the foamy-necked ship floated over

the waves, the prow of the bark over the streams of the ocean, until the men could perceive the cliffs of the Geats, the well-known sea-headlands. The ship, impelled by the wind, forced its way up until it stood upon the beach.

Quickly at the edge of the ocean was the harbor-guard ready, he who for a long time had looked afar for the dear men eagerly over the flood. He secured the broad-bosomed ship upon the strand by two anchor-ropes, lest the might of the waves should cause the wooden bark to drift away. Beowulf gave orders then to carry inland the treasure of heroes, glittering and gold-adorned. Hygelac, the son of Hrethel, giver of treasure, did not have to be sought far thence, for he lived near the sea-wall with his companions.

Splendid was the building, proud was the famous king. In his high halls was Hygd, the daughter of Hareth, his very young queen, yet wise and well-accomplished of mind, though she had lived within the barriers of the stronghold but a few winters. However, she was not contemptible in conduct, nor niggardly in gifts of folk-treasure to the people of the Geats. She did not bear such pride as that of Thryth, the famed queen of the people, terrible of soul. No man of the beloved hall-troop was so bold, except her noble lord, that he dared even to glance at her, for if he did, he might forecast that hand-twisted slaughter-bands would be decreed for him. Quickly after the arrest would the curiously inlaid sword be used to solve the problem, to make known the deadly evil. It is not a habit of mind suitable for a woman to affect, though she be surpassing in her beauty, that a lady intended to be a weaver of peace should attack the life of a valiant man for a supposed insult. However, her husband, kinsman of the Hemmings, put an end to all that. The ale-drinkers said that she became a changed woman, that she caused fewer deaths among her people through treacherous hate, after she, gold-adorned, was given in marriage to the young hero, renowned of lineage, after she journeyed over the gray flood to the hall of Offa at the command of her father. Thereafter she lived well upon the throne, renowned for her gifts, and brooked, while living, the destiny of life. She never lost her exalted love for the prince of heroes, who, as I have heard, was the best of all mankind between the two seas. Therefore Offa, the spear-bold man, became widely renowned for his gifts and battle-power. He ruled his fatherland with wisdom. To him in time Eomaer was born as a help for the heroes, grandson of Hemming, nephew of Garmund, mighty in war.

Beowulf, the valiant hero, strode along the sea-strand with his troop, and traversed the wide shore. The world-candle shone, the sun coming from the south. They performed their journey, hastened with might, until they learned that the protector of earls, the slayer of Ongentheow, the excellent young battle-king, was within his stronghold distributing rings. To Hygelac was the journey of Beowulf straightway made known, that there in his courts, the protector of heroes, his shield-comrade, had returned alive, safe from the battle-play. The hall within was quickly prepared for the guests as the ruler commanded. Beowulf, who had survived the strife, sat beside Hygelac, kinsman beside kinsman, after the lord, through courteous speech, had greeted him kindly with solemn words. Hygd, the daughter of Hareth, passed the mead-cup throughout the hall-building; she loved the people; she bore the stoup of drink in her hands to the Geats.

Hygelac began to question his companion courteously in the high hall—curiosity tormented him—to find out about the expedition of the Sea-Geats. "How did it fare with thee on the jour-

31. **Thryth.** Thryth represented what a queen should not be, even as Heremod served as the example of a bad king. Before her marriage to Offa, Thryth had been a princess, savage in temper, who caused the death of many of her father's warriors because of supposed failures of courtesy to her. After marriage her character improved.

55. **Offa**, king of the Angles in the fourth century, when they still lived on the continent of Europe. It was a descendant of this Offa who became king of Mercia in England (755-794). 76. **slayer of Ongentheow.** See page 48, line 78 ff.

ney, dear Beowulf, when thou suddenly didst purpose to seek battle over the salt water at Heorot? Didst thou in any way amend the widely-known woe for Hrothgar, the famous prince? Because of this expedition I was deeply moved by cares of heart, by waves of sorrow; I put no confidence in the journey of my beloved friend; I begged thee long that thou wouldst not in any way come in contact with the slaughter-demon, but that thou wouldst let the people of the South-Danes settle for themselves their struggle with Grendel. Now I utter thanks to God that I can again behold thee sound of body."

Beowulf spake, the son of Ecgtheow: "It is no secret to many men, Lord Hygelac, about the famous battle-meeting which took place between Grendel and me upon the hall-floor, where he had caused a multitude of sorrows to the Victory-Scyldings, never-ending misery. I so avenged all that no offspring of Grendel dare boast about that dawn-tumult, whoever of the cursed race lives longest, imbedded in treachery.

"I came straightway to the ring-hall and greeted Hrothgar. Soon the famous son of Healfdane, after he knew the purpose of my mind, assigned a seat to me beside his sons. The troop rejoiced; I never have seen under the vault of heaven greater joy at a banquet of hall-sitters. At times the illustrious queen, the peace-bringer of the people, moved throughout the hall, and urged her young sons to emulous deeds. Often she gave to a man ring-circlets before she returned to her seat. At times the daughter of Hrothgar bore the ale-cup before the warrior-troop to the earls at the upper end of the hall. She is the one whom I have heard the hall-sitters name Freawaru, as she distributed riveted-treasure to the heroes. She is betrothed, young and gold-adorned, to the happy son of Froda. It has occurred to the friend of the Scyldings, the guardian of the realm, and he believes it good counsel, that he by means of this woman may settle many slaughter-feuds and battle-contests. But it is not often the case that after the slaughter of a prince the deadly spear remains quiet for more than a little while, though a bride may help somewhat!

"The newly-married king of the Heathobards and each of his thanes may suffer great displeasure when some noble young prince of the Danes, accompanied by a warrior-troop, walks about the hall of the king with the bride. On the visitors will probably glitter many an ancestral heirloom, hard ring-swords of the Heathobard warriors, who had possession of these weapons until in the fatal shield-play they led to destruction their dear companions and lost their own lives. Then over the beer some old spear-warrior who sees these spoils and recalls all that spear-slaughter of his friends will begin with fierce memories and sinister mind to test by his thoughts the temper of some young warrior, to awake the war-feud, and he will speak as follows: 'Mightest thou, my comrade, recognize the dear iron-sword that thy father with visored helmet bore to the battle on that last expedition when the Danes slew him and kept possession of the slaughter-field; when no blood-money was paid after the fall of heroes? Now some son of the murderers struts here on our hall-floor, exulting in these spoils of war, boasts of the murder, and dares to wear openly these treasures which by right thou shouldst possess!' So he ex-

18. **Beowulf spake.** The epic audience liked repetitions, which were really different versions of a story. Those who heard this part of *Beowulf* got not only a summary of the first two parts, but some new details as well. 37. **illustrious queen,** Wealhtheow. 43. **the daughter of Hrothgar,** not mentioned in the first part of *Beowulf*. The third part gives a slightly different version of the events in the first part.

49. **betrothed.** In notes on line 2, page 13, and line 22, page 25, as well as in the passages upon which they are based, we have observed the nature of the Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon blood-feuds. In the present instance we learn how such feuds recurred. To allay a feud, Hrothgar gave his daughter Freawaru in marriage to Ingeld, the young leader of the Heathobards. Unfortunately in the last outbreak of the feud the Danes had won. Consequently in the bridal train of Freawaru would be many a young Danish warrior whose father had killed his Heathobard opponent long before, and whose son probably wore trophies of the victory. All that would be needed to start the feud again would be a few reminders to the young Heathobards by some old Heathobard warrior that these young Danes were the descendants of the murderers of their fathers.

horts and reminds on each occasion with wounding words until for the deeds of his father the attendant-thane of the bride sleeps a blood-stained sleep caused by the bite of the sword which is guilty of his life. The murderer will escape alive, for he knows the land well. Thus will be broken on both sides the sword-oaths of the earls, and thereafter slaughter-hatred for King Ingeld shall boil up, and as a result of the surges of sorrow his love for his wife will become cooler. For these reasons I place no account upon the friendliness of the Heathobards, or upon the sincerity of their tribal peace and firm friendship for the Danes.

"Now I will tell thee about Grendel, that thou mayst readily know, O giver of gifts, the outcome of the hand-to-hand fight between us. After the jewel of heaven had passed over the earth, an angry demon, horrible servant of darkness, came to visit us, where we safe and sound guarded the hall. Straightway battle impended for Hondscio, life-slaughter for the doomed man. He lay nearest the door, the armored fighter. To the famous kinsman-thane Grendel became a mouth-murderer; for he devoured the entire body of the beloved man. Nor did the bloody-toothed one, eager for destruction, intend empty-handed to depart from the gold-hall, but he, proud in his might, took my measure, and seized me with his ready grip. A pouch hung at his side, wide and strange, fashioned with cunning bands; it was contrived skillfully by the craft of devils from the skins of dragons. The terrible beginner of deeds intended to put me, guiltless one, therein as one of many. It did not happen so, however, after I arose in my anger.

Too long is it to tell how I requited the harmer of the people for each of his crimes, on the occasion when I, O my prince, honored thy nation by my deeds. He escaped, and for a little while kept the enjoyment of life. However, his right hand became a hostage in Heorot to guard his tracks, and he abjectly, sad of mind, dived to the bottom of his pool. For this mortal combat the friend of the Scyldings rewarded me well with plated gold, with many treasures, after morning came and we sat down to the banquet. There were speeches and the music of lays; the aged Scylding, knowing much of past days, discoursed. At times the battle-warrior touched the glee-wood, the joy of the harp; at times he made truthfully and sadly a ballad-lay; at times the great-hearted king related in accordance with the truth some strange story; at times, bowed with age, the ancient battle-warrior began to lament his youth and battle-strength; his heart throbbed within him, when he, wise in winters, remembered many things.

"So we in the hall took our joy the livelong day until another night came upon men. Then was the mother of Grendel quickly ready with harmful vengeance. She journeyed to the hall, full of sorrow. Death had taken away her son, the battle-hate of the Weders. The monstrous hag avenged him and slew a warrior with might. Life departed from Aeschere, the wise, ancient councilor; nor, after morning came, might the people of the Danes burn with fire the man, weary in death. Neither could they raise the beloved one on a funeral-pyre, for she bore away that body in her devilish embrace underneath the mountain torrent. That was to Hrothgar the bitterest of sorrows which had long befallen the leader of the people. Then the prince, sad in mind, entreated me by thy life to perform in the turmoil of the waves heroic deeds, risk my life in doing a feat worthy of praise. He promised me a reward. I found the ground-hag, grim and grisly, in the surge of the flood, as is well known to thee. For a while we fought hand to hand. The flood boiled with gore when I cut off the head from the mother of Grendel in her ground-

6. **murderer.** Of course the murderer is a Heathobard, and would be protected by the people of the land. 26. **Hondscio.** Cf. page 21, line 22. 37. **A pouch hung at his side.** Here is another place where this version of Beowulf's battle with Grendel differs from the version in the first part.

67. **battle-warrior,** possibly Hrothgar. An accomplished warrior knew how to compose ballads.

lair with a mighty sword. With difficulty did I escape with my life, but I was not doomed yet, and the protector of earls, the son of Healfdane, again gave me a multitude of treasure.

"So the king of the people lived as befitted his state. Not at all did I lose the reward, the meed of strength, for the son of Healfdane gave me gifts to my satisfaction, which I, O my king, wish to bring to thee and gladly present them. Still is all my destiny dependent upon thy favor. I have no near kinsmen, O Hygelac, save thee."

He commanded them to bring in the boar-helmet, the gray byrnie, the splendid war-sword, and afterwards made a formal speech: "Hrothgar gave me this battle-equipment and commanded that I should give it thee first as assurance of his consideration. He said that Heorogar, the king of the Scyldings, had long possessed it, nor was he willing to give up these breast-adornments to his son, bold Heoroward. Enjoy all these presents well."

I heard that four dappled-gray horses, alike in every respect, followed the armor, and that Beowulf gave the possession of them to Hygelac. So ought a kinsman to do; not at all should he weave a treacherous snare for another, or with secret skill prepare death for his hand-companion. To Hygelac, strong in war, was his nephew greatly devoted, and each to the other was mindful of benefits conferred. I heard that Beowulf gave to Hygd the necklace, the splendid wonder-treasure, which Wealhtheow, daughter of the king, had given him, together with three horses, slender-limbed and saddle-bright. Thereafter the necklace adorned her bosom.

So the son of Ecgtheow bore himself boldly, as a man renowned in battle and in good deeds. He acted as a man ought to do. Not at all in drunken revel did he slay his hearth-companions, nor was his mind revengeful, but he, battle-bold, had the mightiest strength among mankind, the ample gift which God had given him. Long had he been despised when young, for the sons of the Geats did not then account him of any worth, nor did the prince of the troop grant much honor to him on the mead-bench, since the warriors thought that he was a slothful and unwarlike youth. But a recompense for each of his disgraces came to the man happy in fame.

Then Hygelac, the protector of earls, the battle-famous king, commanded them to fetch in the sword of Hrethel, adorned with gold. There was no better treasure-weapon among the Geats in the shape of a sword. This he placed upon Beowulf's knees and gave him, besides, seven thousand hides of land, a building, and a throne. To them both was control of land hereditary by birth, as well as their courts, their right of inheritance, and the wide kingdom; but Hygelac excelled in rank.

PART IV

The Battle with the Dragon

In later days it happened, in the battle-crashes, that when Hygelac lay dead, and to Heardred, his son, the battle-swords had become slayers from under the sheltering shields, that from among the victory-people, the bold battle-warriors, the War-Scylfings, assailed by war, chose as leader Beowulf, the grandson of Hereric. Then the broad kingdom came into the possession of Beowulf, and he ruled it for fifty winters.

Old was the king, the ancient guardian of his realm, at the time when a dragon began upon dark nights to show his power, he who in a hill-valley, in a lofty

22. **Heorogar.** Cf. page 12, line 54.

58. **slothful and unwarlike youth.** Many Anglo-Saxon heroes were rather backward as boys, and rose to glory only with the coming of manhood. 63. **Hrethel.** See note on line 75, page 16. See also page 42, line 77. 68. **hide,** a measure of land varying in Anglo-Saxon and Norman times from eighty to one hundred twenty acres, or as much as a thong made from a single oxhide could encircle. Hygelac gave Beowulf the equivalent of an English earldom. 73. **excelled in rank.** The families of Hygelac and Beowulf were both renowned as war leaders, but Hygelac's family was senior to that of Beowulf. 74. **In later days.** A long period of years elapses between Part III and Part IV. For the intervening events see note on line 83, page 41.

cave of rocks, guarded a treasure-hoard. A path unknown to men led to it, and therein went some man, compelled by necessity, and took away part of the heathen-hoard. His hand took a hall-cup, glittering with treasure, nor did he return it again, nor deceive the sleeping guardian by his thievish craft, as neighboring people found when the monster became aroused in anger. Not at all of his own accord did that one who harmed the monster break into the dragon-hoard, but out of dire need did some warrior-thane who fled from hateful blows, shelterless and banned for his crimes, make his way into the barrow. As soon as he looked in, awful terror arose in the stranger; yet the wretched one, even when fear came upon him, saw the glittering treasure. In the earth-house were many ancient heirlooms, as if some man of noble lineage had sadly hidden away these dear treasures, the immense treasure-hoard.

Death took away all those of former times, and he alone of the tried war-troop longest survived; mourning for his friends, the guardian expected to live there, for a while, in order that he might enjoy for a little time the treasures of long ago. A mountain-cave stood all ready on the plain near the water-waves, close by a cape, utterly inaccessible. Therein the guardian of the rings bore the treasure of earls, the hoard of plated gold worth guarding, and spake a few words: "Hold thou now, O earth, since warriors may not, the possession of earls! Lo! from thee originally these treasures came. War-

1. **treasure-hoard.** Both Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon tribes believed that dragons sought out treasure-hoards and guarded them. In some cases a mortal or giant guardian turned into a dragon. When anyone came upon the hoard and disturbed the dragon, it avenged itself upon the surrounding countryside, usually by breathing out poisonous and flaming breath. See notes on line 93, page 22, and on line 9, page 23. The hoards were either deposited in grave-mounds, or made by the survivor of a tribe which had been exterminated, and who returned to their stockade and hid the tribal wealth.
27. **mourning for his friends.** This elegy should be compared carefully with Hrothgar's speech to Beowulf at the end of Part II, page 33 (see note on line 86, page 33). The elegy represents a class of poetry in which the singer ponders over the mystery of life, but on its sorrows rather than its joys, and especially on sorrows to come. Subsequent English poetry is filled with this elegiac mood, as is manifested in Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" (page 416) and Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" (page 452).

death, fierce life-bale, took away each of the men of my people who gave up this life, of those who in days of old beheld the hall-joy. I have none who may bear the sword or polish the plated tankard, the dear drinking-cup. The tried warrior-troop has departed. The hard helmet, adorned with gold, shall be deprived of its treasure; the polishers sleep who used to keep the battle-helmets in order. Likewise the coat-of-mail, which experienced in battle over the clash of the shields the bite of the sword, now must molder, since the heroes are dead. The ring-byrnie may no longer after the death of the warrior-chief fare far upon the heroes. No longer is there joy of the harp, pleasure from the glee-wood. Nor does the good hawk circle through the hall, nor does the swift horse paw in the courtyard. Slaughter-death has sent away many of the race of men."

So, sorrowful-minded, he uttered his lament, alone for them all, and joyless wandered about by day and night until the surge of death touched his heart.

An old twilight-prowler found the hoard-joy standing open, who, breathing flames, frequents the mountain-caves—the sinuous hate-dragon who flies by night, surrounded by flame. Him the land-dwellers mightily fear. It is his nature to seek a treasure-hoard in the ground, where he, old in winters, may guard the heathen-gold. In no wise does it profit him.

So the harmer of the people, immense in strength, for three hundred winters guarded in the earth the treasure-cave, until a man angered him in mind, who bore to his lord a plated flagon and asked him for a pledge of protection. Then was the hoard explored; the ring-hoard was rifled; his lord granted the prayer of the wretched man and saw for the first time the ancient work of men.

Then the dragon awoke and strife was renewed; he sniffed along the rock; the strong-hearted one discovered the foot-tracks of his enemy, who had crept along by secret craft near the head of the dragon. So may a man

not fated to die easily survive war and exile, who hath favor of the Almighty. The guardian of the hoard sought eagerly along the valley-bottom; he wanted to find the man who, during his sleep, had done him injury. Hot and furious he circled the mound completely on the outside. There was no man on the waste. However, the dragon rejoiced in the prospect of war-work, and for the time being returned to his mountain-cave and sought the missing treasure-cup. Soon he discovered that some man had been tampering with his mighty treasure of gold. With difficulty did the hoard-guardian wait until evening came. So angry was the watchman of the hill that he wished to repay the theft of the dear drinking-cup with a blast of flame.

Finally day departed, to the satisfaction of the dragon. No longer did he wish to wait, crouched on the cliff-wall, but he fared forth, breathing fire and impelled by flame. The attack was a fearful one for the people of the land, and it was to be concluded quickly and fatally upon the body of their giver of treasure. The monster began to spew fire and to burn the bright fortress-hall. The light of the burning arose as a trouble to the elder councilors. Nor did the hostile wind-flier leave anything alive. The ravaging of the dragon was widely to be seen, and the hate of the creature who had driven his foes into dire straits was apparent near and far, how he had raged against and oppressed the people of the Geats. Before the dawn he hurried back to the hoard in the secret barrow. By firebrands and burning had he surrounded the country peoples. He trusted in his mountain-fastness and in his battle-power, but his confidence deceived him.

Quickly, in truth, was the terror made known to Beowulf, when his own home, the best of buildings, the gift-seat of the Geats, collapsed in the surge of fire. To the excellent man was this distressful in heart, mightiest of mind-sorrows. The wise man thought that his rule had angered bitterly Eternal God, because he had departed from the old laws. His bosom within was agitated with dark thoughts, unwonted for him.

The fiery serpent had burned utterly with flames the fastness of the people—all the land next to the ocean, the earth-wall of the people. But the battle-king, the leader of the Weders, bethought him of vengeance. The protector of warriors, the lord of earls, commanded that a wondrous all-iron battle-shield be made for him. He saw clearly that a wooden shield would not help him against fire. It was fated that the excellent prince was to see the end of his days in the life of this world, and the dragon as well, though he had long possessed the treasure-hoard. The prince of rings scorned to attack the far-flier with the warrior-troop, or with a great army. He did not dread the battle, nor did the war-power of the dragon and its gigantic strength deter him at all, because he formerly had endured many dire encounters and battle-clashes, after he, rich in victories, had cleansed the hall of Hrothgar and in the conflict had gripped to death the hostile tribe of Grendel.

Nor had that been the least of hand-to-hand conflicts in which they slew Hygelac, after the king of the Geats, the son of Hrethel, the dear friend of the people, died of his sword-wounds in the battle-rushes, in the land of the Frisians, smitten by the sword. Beowulf escaped thence by his own might and achieved a feat of swimming. He bore in his arms thirty battle-trophies when he plunged into the ocean. Not at all did the Hetware need to be proud of the battle on foot, they who bore their linden-wood shields against him. After-

83. Nor had that been. In this paragraph is the fullest account of the historical basis of *Beowulf* to which allusion was made in the note on line 37, page 27. About 512 A.D. Hygelac made a raid upon the Frisian coast and was slain by the Franks while making off with the booty (see Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum*, Bk. III, Ch. 3). Beowulf escaped by swimming and was offered by Hygd, the queen, the kingship of the Geats, since her son Heardred was too young. Beowulf, however, became regent, which position he held until the young man was killed by Onela, the son of Ongentheow, king of the Swedes, because Heardred had protected his brother Ohthere's rebellious sons, Eanmund and Eadgils. On Heardred's death Onela could not hold the kingdom of the Geats, and Beowulf was allowed to become king. Later Beowulf helped Eadgils to kill Onela and to become king of the Swedes. **94. the Hetware,** the Franks.

wards but a few of the warriors got back to their homes. The son of Ecgtheow, the wretched wanderer, swam over the expanse of waters to his people. There Hygd offered him the hoard and the kingdom, rings and princely throne, for she did not trust her son, that he against foreign nations could hold the seats of his people after Hygelac was dead. But not the sooner on this account might the wretched people obtain from the prince by any means that he would become ruler in place of Heardred; nor did he accept the kingdom. Nevertheless he maintained the young king among the people by friendly counsel, by kindness with protection, until the boy came of age so that he could rule among the Weder-Geats. Him the banished sons of Ohthere sought over the sea. They had rebelled against the lord of the Scylfings, the best of sea-kings who distributed treasure throughout the Swedish kingdom, a famous prince. Their visit caused the death of the son of Hygelac, since he in return for his hospitality received a death-wound through sword-strokes. Thereafter did the son of Ongentheow return home, when Heardred lay dead, and he allowed Beowulf to keep the dominion and rule the Geats. Beowulf was a good king. He paid back the slaughter of his prince in later days, when he became a friend to the exiled Eadgils, and assisted the son of Ohthere with an army, warriors, and weapons over the sea-way. He avenged in turn the bitter war-raid, and he deprived the king of his life.

So did the son of Ecgtheow survive each hostile attack, dangerous encounter, and mighty deed, until that day when he prepared to battle with the dragon. With eleven men the lord of the Geats, impelled by anger, departed to hunt the monster. He had learned by inquiry how the malicious war-feud arose; for on his knees had been placed by the hand of the finder the famous treasure-cup. So the thirteenth man, this despised captive, dejected in mind, had to lead the way to the plain. Against his will he went along to the place where he alone knew the earth-hall was, the cave under the ground near the surge of the sea. Within, it was full of jewels and wrought-work. A monstrous guardian, the ready war-worker, kept guard over the war-treasure, the ancient one under the earth. It was not an easy purchase for any man to make.

Upon the sea-cape sat down the battle-bold king. Then the gold-friend of the Geats bade farewell to his hearth-companions. To him there was a sorrowful mind, dubious, and expectant of death. Fate stood immeasurably near, which was about to befall the ancient man, touch the fortress of his soul, and sunder thence life from body. Not long after this was the life of the prince to be contained in his flesh.

Beowulf spake, the son of Ecgtheow: "I have survived in youth many battle-rushes, times of conflict. I remember them all. I was seven winters old when Hrethel, the young prince of treasures, dear ruler of the people, took me from my father, held me and cherished me, gave me treasure and feast, and remembered his relationship. While he lived was I not one whit the less respected of warriors in the stronghold than each of his sons, Herebald, Haethcyn, and my Hygelac. For the eldest son, unfittingly by the deed of his brother, was a slaughter-bed prepared, when Haethcyn brought low by an arrow from his horn-tipped bow his dear lord. He missed his mark and shot his brother with the bloody point; he became a brother-murderer. That was a combat for which there was no recompense, a fearful crime grievous to the heart. Nevertheless, the prince had to depart from life unavenged.

"In like manner is it a cause for mourning to any ancient man to live to see his young son ride on his way to the gallows. Then he makes a dirge, a sorrow-song, when he sees his son hang there as a joy for the raven, and he, old and impotent, may not con-

20. **banished sons**, Eanmund and Eadgils. 25. **prince**, Onela (see note on line 56, page 12). 39. **king**, Onela.

73. **Beowulf spake**, etc. In foreboding, Beowulf reviews his life and the fate which has overtaken his predecessors. Notice the description of the father whose son has been hanged. It is practically a dirge.

trive any help. Always is he reminded upon every morning of that last journey of his son. He does not care to await in his courts the coming of another heir, for this one son has through the compulsion of death experienced deeds of violence. Sorrowing in heart he looks upon the room of his son, the empty wine-hall, the windy resting-place bereft of joy. The rider sleeps, the warrior in his tomb; there is no sound of the harp, joy in the halls as of old. The aged man departs then to his sleeping-couch; in solitude he sings a sad lament for his only son; all too empty seem to him the plains and the homestead.

"So the protector of the Weders for Herebald in agitation bore sorrow of heart. Nor might he at all avenge the feud upon the murderer. He could not pursue with hatred the battle-warrior for his hateful deeds, though he was no longer dear to him. Because of this sorrow which had bitterly befallen him, he forsook the joy of man, and chose the light of God. He left to his sons, as does a prosperous man, the land and the stronghold of his people, when he departed from life.

"Then was there crime and strife between the Swedes and the Geats, common hostility over the wide waters, after Hrethel died, and the sons of Ongentheow became bold and battle-brave. They did not wish to keep friendship over the sea, but about Ravenscrag they often made fearful and malicious slaughter-raids. That feud my dear kinsmen avenged, as became widely known, though one of them paid for the hard bargain with his life. Upon Haethcyn, lord of the Geats, war-slaughter impended. Then in the morning I learned that one kinsman had avenged upon the murderer with the edges of the sword the death of the other kinsman, when Ongentheow attacked Eofor. His battle-helmet split in pieces, and the aged Scylfing fell back, war-pale. Yet his hand remembered enough of the feud, it did not withhold the deadly blow. I repaid in that battle, with my grim sword, as was granted me, the treasures which Hygelac had given me. He had rewarded me with land, possessions, and a joyful home; there was no need to him to seek among the Gifthas, or the Spear-Danes, or in Sweden a worse war-wolf warrior, or hire him for pay. Always was I in the van of the troop, alone at the battle-point, and so while I live shall I perform battle while this sword endures which has served me both early and late, after I in the presence of the tried warriors became the slayer of Dayraven, the warrior of the Hugs. He did not carry back war-spoils, breast-ornaments, to the king of the Frisians, but the guardian of the battle-banner fell in the fray, the prince in his might. The sword did not slay him, but the mailed fist of battle burst in his chest and the surges of his heart. Now shall the sword-edge, the hand, and the tough sword fight for the hoard."

Beowulf uttered for the last time his battle-boast: "In youth I hazarded many contests, and still will I, ancient guardian of my people, enter battle to do deeds of glory, if the enemy of man will seek me from his lair!"—The bold helmet-bearer greeted for the last time each of his men, his dear companions—"I would not bear a sword as a weapon against the dragon if I knew how else I might make good my boast against my adversary, as I did formerly against Grendel; but I expect here hot battle-fire, venomous breath, and poison. Therefore I have put on my shield and byrnie. Not one foot will I retreat from the guardian of the mountain-cave, but we shall battle at the cliff-wall as Fate, the judge of men, shall decree for us. I am confident in my mind that I shall

30. **crime and strife**, etc. The feud between the Swedes and the Geats was of ancient date. We have just heard how Hygelac, his son Heardred, and Beowulf carried on the feud against Onela. Now we go back to that stage where Haethcyn, Hygelac's elder brother, warred against Ongentheow, king of the Swedes, and father of Onela and Ohthere. A more detailed account of the conflict is given by the messenger of Wiglaf toward the end of the poem (page 48, lines 76 ff.). 37. **Ravenscrag**, in the land of the Geats. 39. **kinsmen**, Hygelac and Haethcyn. 40. **one of them**, Haethcyn, who was slain at Ravenswood by Ongentheow. 44. **one kinsman**, Hygelac. 45. **murderer**, Ongentheow.

47. **other kinsman**, Haethcyn. 48. **Eofor**. With his brother Wulf he slays Ongentheow. 49. **Scylfing**, possibly the warrior who slew Hygelac; possibly Ongentheow. 67. **Hugs**, Franks.

make good my boast upon the battle-flier. Abide ye here upon the hill, ye men in armor, protected by your byrnies, to see which one of us two may survive his wounds after the slaughter-rush. This is not your adventure, nor is it in the power of any man except me alone to perform heroic deeds of might against this adversary. I through my strength shall obtain the gold, or the dread life-bale of battle shall take away your prince!"

Arose then by his shield the bold warrior, courageous under his helmet; he strode armed with his byrnie in under the rocky cliffs, for he trusted in the strength of one man. This was not a journey for a weakling! He who, valiant and good, had endured a multitude of battle-attacks when troops clashed, saw along the cliff-wall rocky arches, whence a stream burst from the mountain. The current of the stream was hot with battle-fire, nor might anyone without getting burned approach the hoard or remain alive in the deep cave because of the fire of the dragon. The prince of the Weder-Geats gave a great shout, for he was angry; the stout-hearted one stormed aloud; the battle-bright voice resounded under the gray cliff.

Hate was aroused, as the hoard-guardian recognized the speech of man; nor was there more time to seek for friendship. Straightway the breath of the adversary issued from the rock, the hot battle-sweat; the earth resounded. The hero, the lord of the Geats, under the mountain-cliff raised the battle-shield against the fearful monster. The evil serpent was eager in heart to seek the conflict. The good war-king had previously drawn the ancient battle-sword keen of edge. Each of the war-minded ones felt awe before the other.

The stout-hearted protector of his friends stood behind his tall shield, as the dragon coiled himself quickly together. Beowulf waited with his weapons. The flaming one came rippling along in coils; he hastened forward writhing. The shield protected well the life and body of the famous prince for a shorter time than he desired, when he on that occasion first used it, for Fate did not assign to him victory in battle. The lord of the Geats lifted up his hand and smote the horribly bright one with the mighty sword, so that the dark sword splintered on the bone; it cut less strongly than the king of the people had need, hard pressed by his trouble. After the battle-blow, the guardian of the mountain-cave, fierce in mind, hurled his slaughter-fire. Wide sprang the battle-gleam. The gold-friend of the Geats could not boast his triumphant victory, for the naked battle-sword failed him in the struggle, as the good iron should not have done. That was not an easy adventure upon which the famous son of Ecgtheow was about to forsake the plain of life; against his will he had to occupy a dwelling elsewhere. So shall each man give up his fleeting days.

It was not long after this that the adversaries came together again. The guardian of the hoard felt emboldened anew; his heart was agitated by his breathing. He who had ruled the people for a long time suffered anguish, surrounded by fire.

Not at all did the sons of princes, the war-troop, stand about him in a company in their battle-bravery, but they crouched in the wood to protect their lives. The mind of one of them alone was agitated with sorrow. Never should a man set aside the obligation of kinship, if his thoughts are what they should be. His name was Wiglaf, the son of Weohstan, an excellent shield-man, prince of the Scylfings, kinsman of Aelfhere, who saw his dear lord suffering under his visored helmet from the hateful attack. He remembered then the honor which Beowulf had formerly done him, the dwelling-place of the Waegmundings, each of the tribal rights which his father had possessed. He could refrain no longer; his hand gripped the shield, the yellow linden-wood, and he drew the ancient sword which was known among men as the heirloom of

100. **Waegmundings**, the tribe to which Beowulf and Weohstan belonged on one side of their ancestry. **tribal rights.** Wiglaf and his father were tribal chiefs subordinate to Beowulf and favored by him.

Eanmund, the son of Ohthere. In that battle Weohstan became the murderer of the friendless exile by the edges of the sword, and bore to his kinsman the brown-colored helmet, the ringed byrnie, the ancient giant-sword which Onela gave to him, the battle-trappings of Onela's relative, the ready army-equipment. Nor did Onela speak about the feud, though Weohstan had slain Onela's nephew. Weohstan held the trappings many half-years, the sword and the byrnie, until his son might achieve the state of being an earl, as his father had before him. Weohstan left to Wiglaf among the Geats a large number of battle-trappings, when he departed from life, an old man upon the other-world journey.

This was the first time that the young fighter was to assist his princely lord in the battle-rush; his courage did not fail him, nor did his kinsman's sword weaken in battle. That the dragon found out when they encountered each other.

Wiglaf spake many befitting words to his companions—his mind was sorrowful: "I remember when we received mead that we promised in the beer-hall to our lord who gave us rings that we would repay him for the war-equipment, for the helmets and hard swords, if such need as the present came upon him. On this account he chose us for the battlefield, and for this expedition, according to his own wishes. He reminded us of glory, and he gave me these treasures, because he believed us to be trustworthy spear-warriors, valiant helmet-wearers, although our lord intended to accomplish alone this mighty work, because the guardian of the people has accomplished the greatest number of famous and courageous deeds among men. Now the day has come that our lord needs the strength of good battle-warriors. Let us go to help our battle-chief while the fire-grim terror faces him! God knows that I wish my body to lie with my gold-giver in the embrace of the fire. It does not seem fitting to me that we should bear our shields back again to the stronghold, unless we may first fell the foe and protect the life of the prince of the Weders. I know well that it is not according to ancient custom that he alone should endure sorrow for the warrior-troop of the Geats and fall thus in battle. To us both shall sword and helmet, byrnie and coat-of-mail be in common."

He strode then through the deadly slaughter-fumes, bearing on his head his battle-helmet, as he went to the aid of his dear lord, and spake brief words: "Beloved Beowulf, perform all things well as thou hast formerly said about the youth of thy life, that thou wouldst not allow honor to fail while thou wert alive. Protect thy life with all thy might, O resolute prince, renowned for thy deeds; I will stand by thee."

After these words the dragon came again in anger; the terrible, malicious spirit, menacing with surges of fire, approached his adversaries, the hated men. With fire-waves had he burned up the shield to its central boss; the byrnie might not give aid to the young spear-warrior, but under the shield of his kinsman the young man performed a deed of might, although his own shield was destroyed by the sparks. Then the battle-king thought once more on glory. He smote a mighty stroke with the battle-sword, so that it bit into the head, urged on by the force of his rage. Naegling broke; the sword of Beowulf, ancient and gray-colored, failed in the battle. To him it was not given that the edges of iron might help him in the battle—his hand was too strong—he who, as I have heard, overtaxed every sword by his stroke when he bore weapons wondrous hard into the battle; it profited him nothing.

Then the ravager of the people for the third time, the fierce fire-dragon, was mindful of the feud; he rushed upon the valiant warrior when the opportunity came for him, hot and battle-grim, and encircled completely the neck of the hero with his ripping teeth.

9. **Nor did Onela speak.** Apparently in the feud of Onela with his nephews, Weohstan, the father of Wiglaf, had slain Eanmund, one of the nephews. Under ordinary circumstances an uncle would avenge his nephew, but Onela in this case was only too glad of the event and gave Weohstan his nephew's armor. Weohstan handed it on to Wiglaf. 23. **kinsman,** Onela.

Beowulf became dyed with the blood of his own body. The blood boiled forth in torrents. Then I heard that at the need of the king of the people the young earl, rising to his full height, revealed his strength, war-craft, and courage, as was his nature. He paid no attention to the head of the dragon; but the hand of the courageous man was burned as he helped his kinsman, and the armed man smote further down the body of the hateful creature, so that the sword penetrated, hostile and gold-plated, and the dragon-fire became less. Now the king kept control of his senses, whipped out his slaughter-knife, biting and battle-sharp, which hung on his byrnie. The protector of the Weders cut the dragon in two in the middle. The demon fell dead; his life departed with its strength; they both had destroyed him, the kindred-princes. So ought a man to do, to stand by his prince in his need!

For the hero this was the last victory which he was to obtain by his own deeds in the world. Then the wound which the earth-dragon had given him began to burn and swell. He soon found that out, when the fearful grip of the poison began to work in his breast. The prince went, wise-thinking man, and seated himself by the cliff-wall; he beheld there the work of the giants, how, fast upon pillars, stood the rocky arches and upheld the earth-building from within. Upon the famous prince, sword-bloody, did his thane, immeasureably good, pour water; from his dear lord, sated with battle, he loosened his helmet.

Beowulf spake despite his wound, deathly pitiful. Full well did he know that he had spent the time of his days and the joy of this earth; the number of his days in life had departed, and death was very near: "Now would I to my son give up my war-equipment, if any heir had been granted to me, belonging to my body. I have ruled this people fifty winters. There was no folk-king of any of those who dwelt near me who dared attack me with battle-swords or cause me fear. I have lived in my stronghold the time appointed by Fate. I have held my own well; I never sought bitter strife, nor did I swear false oaths. For all these things, though sick with my life-wounds, may I rejoice; nor may the Ruler of Men reproach me for the murder of my kinsmen, when He shall take my life from my body. Now do thou quickly go and view the hoard under the gray rock, O dear Wiglaf, now that the dragon lies dead and sleeps because of his mortal wound, bereft of his treasure. Be thou in haste so that I may see the ancient wealth, the treasure of gold, may well observe the bright, cunningly-adorned gems, that I the more easily may because of this wealth of treasure give up my life and my people whom I have so long ruled."

Then I heard that the son of Weohstan quickly obeyed the words of his wounded lord, the battle-sick one; he bore his battle-net, the woven war-sark, in under the roof of the mountain. The proud kinsman-thane, exulting in victory, beheld there, after he had gone along by the wall-bench, a glittering mass of gold-treasure, flashing jewels as they lay on the ground—a wonder on the walls and in the den of the dragon, the ancient one who flew in the dusk—flagons standing, vessels of men of old, now lacking those who should polish them, and deprived of their ornaments. Many a helmet was there, old and rusty; many arm-bands artfully twisted. Easily might this treasure, the gold lying on the ground, make any of mankind overweening in thought; let him guard himself who will! Likewise he saw standing there a banner of gold, high over the hoard, mightiest of hand-wonders, skillfully woven. From it a gleam flashed so that he might perceive the entire cave-floor and its treasure. There

14. became less. What happened was that while the dragon hurled himself upon Beowulf over the iron shield, Wiglaf stabbed the dragon in the entrails from beneath the shield. **34. work of the giants.** The dragon's cave seems to have been part natural and part artificial. Its large arches are spoken of as the work of giants. Probably they were built by the Romans, whose architecture was regarded by the Anglo-Saxons with superstitious awe.

was no sign of the dragon, for the sword had taken him away.

Then I heard that the mound was robbed of its hoard, the ancient work of giants, by one man. He loaded in his bosom cups and vessels at his own will; he also took the banner, brightest of tokens. The iron sword of the ancient ruler, welling with fatal waves, had slain the dragon, who had been the guardian of these treasures for a long time, and had waged fierce flame-terror at midnight, until he died the death.

The messenger was in haste, eager for the return journey. He hastened on with his treasures. Anxiety tormented him, stout of heart, as to whether he should find living upon the plain the prince of the Weders, sick in his strength, where he had formerly left him. He with the treasure found the famous prince, his lord, bloody and at the end of his life. The warrior began to throw water upon him again, until the beginning of words broke from his breast.

Then the hero spake, the ancient man, in sorrow, as he looked upon the gold: "I wish to give thanks in every way to the Lord, the King of Glory, the Eternal Ruler, for these treasures upon which I gaze here, because I might before the day of my death obtain them for my people. Now in exchange for this hoard of treasure have I laid down my aged term of life. It is thy task now ever to fulfill the need of the people! I shall not stay here long. Command the battle-famous heroes to build a funeral-mound, splendid beside the gleaming bale-fire, upon a cape near the sea. It shall be for a memorial to my people and shall tower high upon the whale-cape, so that sea-faring men hereafter shall call it the funeral-mound of Beowulf, when the sea-mists drive the high ships over the floods afar."

From his neck the strong-minded prince took the golden necklace, and gave it to the thane. He also gave the glittering-gold helmet to the young spear-bearer, the ring and his battle-sark; he commanded him to use them well. "Thou art the last of the race of the Waegmundings. Fate has swept away to their appointed doom all my kinsmen, all the earls in their might; I must after them."

That was the last word of the ancient man, the last thought of his heart before he was ready for the funeral pyre, the hot slaughter-waves. From his heart departed his soul to seek the judgment of the just. Thus had it happened to the young man tragically that he had on the ground beheld his dearest kinsman at the end of his life faring miserably; the slayer likewise lay dead, the horrible earth-dragon, deprived of life, oppressed by slaughter. The coiled dragon might not longer rule the ring-hoard, but him the sword of iron had taken away, the hard battle-sharp work of hammers, so that the wide-flier lay on the ground near the treasure-cave, stilled by reason of his wounds. No more along the air would he fly in curves at play by night, nor, proud in the possession of treasure reveal his form, but he fell to the earth because of the hand-deeds of the battle-chief. To few men of might, if to any in this world, has it happened, I have heard, though he were bold in every deed, that he should endure the battle-rush of a poisonous foe or disturb with his hands the ring-cave, if the watching guardian found him lurking in his lair. A quantity of lordly treasure was paid for by the death of Beowulf, and each adversary reached the end of his transitory life.

It was not long thereafter that the battle-laggards forsook the wood, the feeble oath-breakers, ten of them together, who had not dared before to wield their spears in the great need of their lord; but they now shamefacedly bore their shields, their battle-adornments, to where the aged one lay, and they looked upon Wiglaf. The warrior sat exhausted by the shoulders of his lord and tried to rouse him with water. He had no success; he might not upon the earth hold the life of his chieftain, no matter how much he wished it,

87. **ring-cave**, treasure cave.

for he could not change the will of the Almighty. The judgment of God decreed itself by deeds to each of mankind, as he still does.

Then from the young warrior a grim answer was easily got by those whose courage had formerly forsaken them. Wiglaf spake, the son of Weohstan; the sorrowful man looked upon the unloved ones: "Lo, he can say, whoever intends to speak the truth, that the lord who gave ye gifts, the war-equipment in which ye stand there, when he on the ale-bench often gave to those who sat in his hall helmet and byrnie, the prince to the most excellent thanes that he might find anywhere either far or near, utterly to no purpose did he throw away the war-weeds when the battle beset him. Not at all did the folk-king need to boast of his army-comrades. However, God, the Ruler of Victories, granted him that he alone might avenge himself with the sword, when there was need to him of strength. I could afford him in battle but little protection, though I intended to help my kinsman according to my ability. He was becoming weaker continually when I with my sword pierced his life-enemy and the fire less strongly boiled from his head. Too few defenders pressed about the prince when his time of distress came upon him. Now shall the receiving of treasure and swords, all home-joy and comfort, fail your tribe!"

Then Wiglaf commanded that the result of the battle be announced at the stockade up over the sea-cliff, where the main troop of earls throughout the morning of the day had sat, sad in mind—they who bore shields—for they awaited either the death of their lord, their beloved leader, or his return. Not at all was that man silent about the new state of affairs who rode over the promontory, but he spake the truth so that all might hear:

"Now is the joy-giver of the people of the Weders, the lord of the Geats, fast upon his death-bed. He inhabits the slaughter-rest because of the deeds of the dragon. Beside him, sick with a cutlass wound, lies his life-adversary. With his sword he could not wound his opponent in any way. Wiglaf, the son of Weohstan, sits over Beowulf—one earl over the other, who is dead. He holds the head-watch over the spirit-weary ones, both our beloved lord and the hateful dragon.

"Now for us people may be the expectation of war-time, as soon as among the Franks and the Frisians the fall of our king becomes widely known. The strife with the Hugs was a hard one, when Hygelac made a sea-raid into the land of the Frisians, where the Hetware vanquished him in battle, overcame him mightily with their surplus strength, so that the byrnied warrior had to yield; he fell among his troop. Not at all did the prince give treasure to his band of warriors. To us ever afterwards has the Merovingian king been ill-disposed.

"Nor do I put any confidence in the pact and troth of the Swedish people, for the feud was widely known when Ongentheow deprived of life Haethcyn, the son of Hrethel, at Ravenswood, when in great pride the people of the Geats made a raid upon the Battle-Scylfings. Immediately Ongentheow, the wise father of Ohthere, aged and terrible, made a counter-attack; he destroyed the sea-king and released his own wife, the aged consort adorned with gold, the mother of Onela and Ohthere; and then he pursued his life-enemies so that with difficulty, deprived of their lord, they got into Ravensthicket. Ongentheow besieged with a large army the survivors of the sword, exhausted with their wounds. He kept threatening the wretched troop throughout the night, and said that in the morning he would destroy them with the edges of the sword, and he would hang some upon the gallows-tree for the sport of birds. Comfort

62. **expectation of war-time.** The messenger foretells the feuds which he expects will break upon the Geats when their former enemies know that Beowulf is dead. 67. **Hygelac,** referring to his raid against the Hugs and the Hetware, both Frankish tribes, in which he lost his life (see note on line 83, page 41). 75. **Merovingian king,** the king of the Franks. 80. **Ravenswood,** probably in Sweden. For a summary of the feud between the Swedes and the Geats, see notes on line 83, page 41, and line 30, page 43.

afterwards came to the dreary-minded ones about the time of dawn, as soon as they heard the horn and trumpet-blast of Hygelac, when the valiant man came upon their trail with the tried troop of his people.

"Then was a blood-path of Swedes and Geats, a slaughter-rush of men, widely evident, when the people roused themselves to fight. Valiant Ongentheow, the wise and sad-minded king, retreated with his relatives upon his stronghold; he moved farther up into the country. He had heard of the battle-might of Hygelac, the war-craft of the proud one; he did not put enough confidence in his own power of resistance to oppose the seamen, the ocean-farers, to defend his hoard, his sons, and his wife; he was soon to depart thence, the aged man, under the wall of earth. Straightway pursuit was offered to the people of the Swedes; the banner of Hygelac overran the place of refuge after the offspring of Hrethel had swarmed over the palisade. There gray-haired Ongentheow was brought to bay by the edges of the sword, so that the king of the people had to submit to the single decisive attack of Eofor. Wulf, the Wonreding, in anger reached Ongentheow with his weapon, so that because of the wound, blood in streams spurted forth from under his hair. But the aged Scylfing was not at all dismayed, for he paid back with a worse exchange the slaughter-stroke, after the king of the people had turned upon him. Wulf, the bold son of Wonred, might not give a return blow to the aged warrior, for Ongentheow had cut in two the helmet on his head, so that Wulf, rippling with blood, staggered and fell on the earth, though he was not yet doomed, but recovered, in spite of the wound which had touched him. When his brother fell, Eofor, the valiant thane of Hygelac, over the shield-guard of Ongentheow, cut through his gigantic helmet by means of his ancient giant-sword. Then fell the king, guardian of the people; he was struck in his life.

"At once many bound up Wulf's wounds and raised him up, when it was made clear to them that they were masters of the slaughter-field. Immediately Eofor plundered Ongentheow and took from him his iron byrnie, his hard-hilted sword, and his helmet together. He bore the war-gear of the old man to Hygelac. Hygelac received the trappings and courteously promised him rewards among the people, and he fulfilled his promise; the heir of Hrethel, the lord of the Geats, repaid Eofor and Wulf for the battle-rush, when he came home, with a quantity of treasures, gave to each one of them a hundred thousand hides of land and interlocked rings—no man on earth could reproach them for these rewards, after they had gained glory in battle—and to Eofor he gave his only daughter as an adornment for his home.

"This is the feud and the state of enmity, slaughter-hatred of men, which I expect when the Swedish people seek us after they have learned that our lord is lifeless, who formerly guarded against enemies the hoard of the kingdom—after the fall of heroes the Scyldings will be bold—he performed good deeds for the people and always fulfilled the duties of an earl.

"Now is haste best for us, to behold the king of our people and to bring him who gave us rings to his funeral-pyre. Not one part of the hoard shall we melt with the mighty one, but the entire treasure, an enormous mass of gold which has been terribly purchased, at the last gasp of his life—all of it shall the brand devour, the fire cover. No earl shall bear these treasures as a memorial, nor beauteous maid wear them upon her neck as a necklace-adornment, but sorrowful of mind, bereft of the gold, often in sorrow shall she tread a strange land now that the war-wise one has laid aside laughter, joy, and the happiness of the harp. Because of this shall the spear on many a cold morning be grasped in the hand, lifted on high; not at all shall the sound of the harp awaken the warriors, but the dusky raven,

87. **funeral-pyre.** The funeral obsequies of Beowulf, which included cremation and burial in a grave-mound, belong to the later customs of the Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon tribes.

eager over the slaughter, shall speak many things; the eagle shall talk of the luck he had in getting his fill, when he with the wolf plundered the slain."

Thus the bold man prophesied with foreboding words; nor did he prove false to Fate in speech.

The troop all arose; they went disheartened with welling tears under Eagle's Cliff to behold the marvel. They found there on the sand, deprived of his life, holding his resting-place, the man who had given them rings in former times. The last day had come upon the good man, when the battle-king, leader of the Weders, died a wondrous death. But first they saw a strange creature, the horrible dragon, lying opposite him upon the plain. The fire-drake, fearful and grisly spirit, was scorched by the flames; as he lay there he was fifty feet long. By nights for a while he had held the joy of the air; then downward did he swoop to visit his den. Now he was fast in death and had enjoyed the last of his earth-caves. By him stood cups and flagons; dishes lay there and the dear sword, eaten through and through with rust; for they had been in the embrace of the earth for a thousand winters, when the heritage of giants, the gold of ancient men, was bound by magic spirits so that no man might touch the ring-hoard, unless God himself, the true King of Victory, granted to whom he would—he is the Protector of heroes—to open the hoard, even to whatsoever man seemed to him best.

It was evident that his purpose had not prospered for the unrighteous man who had hidden the jewels under the wall. The guardian of the hoard had formerly slain a few men, but the feud was fearfully avenged. Mysterious is it when a mighty earl approaches the end of his life-destiny, when no longer may the man dwell in the mead-hall with his kinsmen. Thus the grim strife resulted for Beowulf when he combated the guardian of the mountain-cave; he himself did not know by what means should come his departure from the world.

So until the day of doom the famous princes uttered a mighty curse, they who cast these spells upon the hoard, that any man should be guilty of sin, confined to heathen fanes, fast in the bonds of Hell, tormented by plagues, whoever plundered the cave-bed. Hitherto Beowulf had not perceived the golden grace of the Almighty, before he saw the hoard.

Wiglaf spake, the son of Weohstan: "Often shall many an earl because of one man endure misery, as has happened to us. We could not so counsel our dear prince, guardian of the realm, that he would not encounter the warder of the gold, but allow him to lie in peace where he had been a long time, inhabit his dwelling-place until the end of the world. He went to his high destiny, and now the hoard is revealed, though terribly obtained. That Fate was too severe which enticed the king of the people thither. I have been within and have surveyed all the adornments of the barrow, and it was made clear to me that not easily could entrance under the earth-wall be obtained. In haste I seized a mighty burden of treasures with my hands and bore them out hither to my king. He was still alive, conscious, and in possession of his mental forces. The aged man spake in sorrow many things to me and directed me to greet ye and command that ye build a great funeral-mound at the place of burning, in reward for the deeds of your dear one, a mighty and famous mound, since he was throughout the wide world the most worthy warrior while he could enjoy the wealth of his stronghold. Let us now hasten a second time to behold and obtain the heap of adorned jewels, the wonder under the cliff-wall! I will show ye the way, where ye shall look at close hand upon the rings and the broad gold. Let a bier be quickly prepared when we come out, and let us then bear our lord, the dear man, whither he shall long wait peacefully in the protection of the Almighty."

35. **ring-hoard.** The ancient hoards were protected from violation by spells, but here the heathen custom has been juxtaposed with a Christian interpolation.

The son of Weohstan, the battle-bold hero, ordered many warriors, house-owners, that they should bear from afar wood for the bale-fire to the place where the good leader of the folk lay: "Now shall the sparks and the pale flame eat and devour the strong chief of men, who often endured the iron-showers, when a storm of arrows, sent from the bow-string, flew over the shield-wall; the shaft did its duty; eager with feather-gear it followed the arrow-point."

Now the wise son of Weohstan summoned from the crowd of kindred-thanes the seven best, and he as the eighth of the battle-warriors went under the fearful roof. One man who went ahead bore a torch. Nor was it decided by lot who should plunder the hoard, when the men saw it all lying temporarily unguarded; but little did they mourn when quickly they bore out the costly treasures; moreover they shoved the dragon, the worm-snake, over the sea-cliff; they let the flood embrace the guardian of jewels. Then the wound-gold was placed upon a wagon, an enormous quantity of each kind; they bore their prince, the grizzled battle-warrior, to Whale's Cape.

For him the people of the Geats prepared on the ground a mighty pyre; they adorned it with helmets, with battle-shields, with the bright byrnies, as he had requested. They laid in the midst of it their famous prince, lamenting the hero, their dear lord. Then the men began to awaken on the mound the mightiest of bale-fires; the wood-smoke rose black over the flame, the sounding fire mingled with weeping—the wind-tumult died down until the fire had destroyed the bone-house, hot on his heart. Sad in mind they mourned the death of their lord. Likewise the ancient consort with braided tresses sang, sorrowful-minded, a lament for Beowulf; she said again and again that she feared for herself terrible days of suffering and a multitude of slaughter-combats, terror of warriors, humiliation and captivity. Heaven swallowed the smoke. The people of the Weders constructed on the shore of the cape a funeral-mound which was high and broad; it could be seen far and wide by seamen; they built in ten days the beacon of the battle-famed one; they surrounded the leavings of the flames with a wall, the most worthy that wise men could devise. They placed in the mound rings and jewels, all such equipment as the war-minded men had taken from the hoard. They committed to the earth the treasure of earls, the gold to the ground, where it again shall live as useless for men as it formerly was. Then about the barrow rode the battle-bold ones, sons of the princes, twelve in all; they wished to express their sorrow, to lament their king, to compose dirges, and to speak about the man. They honored his heroism, and they placed the final seal upon his works of might among the war-troop.

So is it fitting that a man should revere his dear lord with words, show love in his heart when he shall fare forth from the body and become a fleeting spirit. So the hearth-companions, the people of the Geats, bemoaned the fall of their lord, and said that he was a world-king, mildest and kindest of men, gentlest to his people, and most eager for praise.

SEVENTH CENTURY

10. **shield-wall.** In battle the Anglo-Saxon warriors made a rampart of their shields. 31. **For him . . . a mighty pyre.** Burial ceremonies figure prominently in English and American literature. Charles Wolfe's "The Burial of Sir John Moore at Corunna" (page 479) and Tennyson's "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington" (page 540) are excellent examples in poetry, while Trelawny's description of the cremation and burial of Shelley (page II-389) is equally significant in prose.

46. **consort**, possibly, Hygd, wife of Hygelac, and mother of Heardred.

*DEIRDRE

OR

THE FATE OF THE SONS OF USNACH, ONE OF THE THREE SORROWS OF STORY-TELLING

Note

The heroic age in Ireland synchronizes well with that of the Anglo-Saxons and other Teutonic and Scandinavian tribes while they were resident on the Continent, extending possibly from the third century B. C. to the fifth century A. D., when the Romans left Britain. From tradition it would seem as if the Celts of this period had a higher and more settled civilization than their Anglo-Saxon contemporaries, which may be accounted for by their being an agricultural people who did not, like the Anglo-Saxons, depend upon the sea for existence. During the first half of the heroic age Ireland was not united under one king, but was divided into approximately five kingdoms, of which Ulster in the north was the most powerful, and Connaught to the south and west next in power. Tradition says that in Ulster, about the time of Christ, there ruled at the capital dun, or fortress, of Emain Macha, Conchubar, the son of Ness. Around him was gathered a mighty band of heroes, chief of whom was Cuchulain, and next to him Conall Cearnach and Fergus. Their chief conflicts were against neighboring tribes for the prosaic purpose of stealing cattle, but these commonplace events are elevated in their traditions to the realm of the heroic and sublime by the deeds of heroes and the supernatural accompaniment of Druid magician priests and of the mighty gods. Both nature and life were viewed with the idealism of youth. It is this radiant sense of the youthful, mysterious, and supernatural beauty of life, closely allied with a sense of humor so naïve and keen as to be frequently grotesque, which chiefly characterizes the Celtic heroic age and its epic sagas.

Deirdre is a story connected with the Cuchulain saga, although Cuchulain plays but a scanty part in it. The Irish bards recognized three stories, whose tragic beauty set them apart from all others, by the title *The Three Sorrows of Story-Telling*, and of them *Deirdre* is the third. As the story has come down to us in many manuscripts of different ages, we can trace its growth from the earliest version, wherein Deirdre is a savage and mighty creature, to the present version, which is approximately of the seventh century, where the tragedy is caused by her beauty alone.

The Gaelic, or Celtic, language has a peculiar flavor of its own. The word pictures are simple and to us often grotesque, as they are taken not merely from the beautiful phenomena of life and nature, but from the homely ones as well.

In one saga warriors complain of their king "because their knives were never greased at his table," meaning that they did not have enough to eat; and in *Deirdre* the beautiful singing of the sons of Usnach is said to have made the cows which heard them give more milk. It is this primal quality, combined with a sense of the mystery of life, which has made not merely ancient but modern Irish literature so fascinating, as a reading of Synge's tragedy, *Riders to the Sea*, and the lyric poems of Moira O'Neill, O'Shaughnessy, and Yeats will show.

The following translation of *Deirdre* by Lady Gregory is itself a product of the revival of Celtic literature which has recently swept Ireland and which has numbered among its leaders the poet W. B. Yeats and the dramatist John Synge. The story of *Deirdre, or The Fate of the Sons of Usnach* is the seventh chapter of Lady Gregory's beautiful translation of the Cuchulain saga under the title *Cuchulain of Muirthemne* (London, 1902).

Now it was one Fedlimid, son of Doli, was harper to King Conchubar, and he had but one child, and this is the story of her birth.

Cathbad the Druid was at Fedlimid's house one day. "Have you got knowledge of the future?" said Fedlimid. "I have a little," said Cathbad. "What is it you are wanting to know?"

"I was not asking to know anything," said Fedlimid, "but if you know of anything that may be going to happen me, it is as well for you to tell me."

Cathbad went out of the house for a while, and when he came back he said:

"Had you ever any children?" "I never had," said Fedlimid, "and the wife I have had none, and we have no hope ever to have any; there is no one with us but only myself and my wife."

*Many Celtic poets, dramatists, and story-tellers have written about Deirdre (pronounced dâr'drĕ). Among them are Joyce, "A. E." (George W. Russell), Hyde, Yeats, Stephens, and Synge.

2. **harper.** That Deirdre should have been sprung from the chief bard of Ulster sets at once the vibrantly emotional and mysterious tone of the story. **Conchubar,** the greatest king of ancient Ulster. Many incidents of his reign, which occurred probably in the first century A.D., are related in the epic sagas of the Celts. 5. **Cathbad the Druid.** In what the power of the Druid priests was supposed to consist is not clearly known to us. In the Irish epics of the heroic age they possess supernatural powers, and are seers, prophets, and magicians.

"That puts wonder on me," said Cathbad, "for I see by Druid signs that it is on account of a daughter belonging to you that more blood will be shed than ever was shed in Ireland since time and race began. And great heroes and bright candles of the Gael will lose their lives because of her."

"Is that the foretelling you have made for me?" said Fedlimid, and there was anger on him, for he thought the Druid was mocking him; "if that is all you can say, you can keep it for yourself; it is little I think of your share of knowledge." "For all that," said Cathbad, "I am certain of its truth, for I can see it all clearly in my own mind."

The Druid went away, but he was not long gone when Fedlimid's wife was found to be with child. And as her time went on, his vexation went on growing, that he had not asked more questions of Cathbad at the time he was talking to him, and he was under a smoldering care by day and by night, for it is what he was thinking, that neither his own sense and understanding, nor the share of friends he had, would be able to save him, or to make a back against the world, if this misfortune should come upon him, that would bring such great shedding of blood upon the earth; and it is the thought that came, that if this child should be born, what he had to do was to put her far away, where no eye would see her, and no ear hear word of her.

The time of the delivery of Fedlimid's wife came on, and it was a girl-child she gave birth to. Fedlimid did not allow any living person to come to the house, or to see his wife but himself alone.

But just after the child was born, Cathbad the Druid, came in again, and there was shame on Fedlimid when he saw him, and when he remembered how he would not believe his words.

But the Druid looked at the child and he said: "Let Deirdre be her name; harm will come through her. She will be fair, comely, bright-haired; heroes will fight for her, and kings go seeking for her."

And then he took the child in his arms, and it is what he said: "O Deirdre, on whose account many shall weep, on whose account many women shall be envious, there will be trouble on Ulster for your sake, O fair daughter of Fedlimid.

"Many will be jealous of your face, O flame of beauty. For your sake heroes shall go to exile; for your sake deeds of anger shall be done in Emain. There is harm in your face, for it will bring banishment and death on the sons of kings.

"In your fate, O beautiful child, are wounds, and ill-doings, and shedding of blood.

"You will have a little grave apart to yourself; you will be a tale of wonder forever, Deirdre."

Cathbad went away then, and he sent Levarcham, daughter of Aedh, to the house; and Fedlimid asked her would she take the venture of bringing up the child, far away where no eye would see her, and no ear hear of her. Levarcham said she would do that, and that she would do her best to keep her the way he wished.

So Fedlimid got his men, and brought them away with him to a mountain, wide and waste, and there he bade them to make a little house, by the side of a round green hillock, and to make a

7. **bright candles**, kenning for *heroes*.

53. **Deirdre.** The name means "trouble," "stirrer-up of strife." 59 ff. **O Deirdre.** These lyrics reveal the difference between the Celtic and the Anglo-Saxon temperament. The style of *Beowulf* is terse, rugged, and vigorous, while that of *Deirdre* is diffuse, emotional, and sensitive. Compare these lyric passages with examples of Irish lyric poetry included in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century selections of lyric poetry (pages 514 ff.). 68. **Emain.** Emain Macha was the capital dun, or fortress, of ancient Ulster. Its remains are about two miles west of the modern city of Armagh, and the site is known as Navan Ring. Within the dun were located three great halls, or houses: the Royal House, in which the kings lived; the House of the Red Branch, in which were kept the heads and spoils of the enemies of Ulster; and the Speckled House, in which was kept the armor of the warriors of Ulster. 79. **Levarcham**, Conchubar's conversation woman, satirist, and poetess. Such a position was unknown among the Anglo-Saxons.

garden of apple-trees behind it, with a wall about it. And he bade them put a roof of green sods over the house, the way a little company might live in it, without notice being taken of them.

Then he sent Levarcham and the child there, that no eye might see, and no ear hear of, Deirdre. He put all in good order before them, and he gave them provisions, and he told Levarcham that food and all she wanted would be sent from year to year as long as she lived.

And so Deirdre and her foster-mother lived in the lonely place among the hills, without the knowledge or the notice of any strange person, until Deirdre was fourteen years of age. And Deirdre grew straight and clean like a rush on the bog, and she was comely beyond comparison of all the women of the world, and her movements were like the swan on the wave, or the deer on the hill. She was the young girl of the greatest beauty and of the gentlest nature of all the women of Ireland.

Levarcham, that had charge of her, used to be giving Deirdre every knowledge and skill that she had herself. There was not a blade of grass growing from root, or a bird singing in the wood, or a star shining from heaven, but Deirdre had the name of it. But there was one thing she would not have her know—she would not let her have friendship with any living person of the rest of the world outside their own house.

But one dark night of winter, with black clouds overhead, a hunter came walking the hills, and it is what happened; he missed the track of the hunt, and lost his way and his comrades.

And a heaviness came upon him, and he lay down on the side of the green hillock by Deirdre's house. He was weak with hunger and going, and perished with cold, and a deep sleep came upon him. While he was lying there, a dream came to the hunter, and he thought that he was near the warmth of a house of the Sidhe, and the Sidhe inside making music, and he called out in his dream, "If there is anyone inside, let them bring me in, in the name of the sun and the moon." Deirdre heard the voice, and she said to Levarcham, "Mother, mother, what is that?" But Levarcham said, "It is nothing that matters; it is the birds of the air gone astray, and trying to find one another. But let them go back to the branches of the wood."

Another troubled dream came on the hunter, and he cried out a second time. "What is that?" asked Deirdre again. "It is nothing that matters," said Levarcham. "The birds of the air are looking for one another; let them go past to the branches of the wood."

Then a third dream came to the hunter, and he cried out a third time, if there was anyone in the hill to let him in for the sake of the elements, for he was perished with cold and overcome with hunger. "Oh! what is that, Levarcham?" said Deirdre. "There is nothing there for you to see, my child, but only the birds of the air, and they lost to one another; but let them go past us to the branches of the wood. There is no place or shelter for them here tonight." "Oh, mother," said Deirdre, "the bird asked to come in for the sake of the sun and the moon, and it is what you yourself told me, that anything that is asked like that, it is right for us to give it. If you will not let in the bird that is perished with cold and overcome with hunger, I myself will let it in."

So Deirdre rose up and drew the bolt from the leaf of the door, and let in the hunter. She put a seat in the place for sitting, food in the place for eating, and drink in the place for drinking, for the man who had come into the house. "Come now and eat

20. **like a rush**, etc. These are typical Celtic similes.

53. **Sidhe** (pronounced *she*), the Celtic name for the fairies who lived underground and whose mounds and rings the Irish still point out. 59. **what is that?** The Irish use the number three frequently in their sagas. Here the hunter cries three times, and Deirdre questions Levarcham three times. Later Deirdre calls three times to Naoise to attract his attention when first they meet; and when Deirdre and Naoise are sought by Fergus in Scotland, he calls three times to them before Naoise recognizes him.

food, for you are in want of it," said Deirdre. "Indeed it is I was in want of food and drink and warmth when I came into this house; but by my word, I have forgotten that since I saw yourself," said the hunter.

"How little you are able to curb your tongue," said Levarcham. "It is not a great thing for you to keep your tongue quiet when you get the shelter of a house and the warmth of a hearth on a dark winter night." "That is so," said the hunter, "I may do that much, to keep my mouth shut; but I swear by the oath my people swear by, if some others of the people of the world saw this great beauty that is hidden away here, they would not leave her long with you."

"What people are those?" said Deirdre. "I will tell you that," said the hunter; "they are Naoise, son of Usnach, and Ainnle and Ardan, his two brothers." "What is the appearance of these men, if we should ever see them?" said Deirdre. "This is the appearance that is on those three men," said the hunter: "the color of the raven is on their hair, their skin is like the swan on the wave, their cheeks like the blood of the speckled red calf, and their swiftness and their leap are like the salmon of the stream and like the deer of the gray mountain; and the head and shoulders of Naoise are above all the other men of Ireland." "However they may be," said Levarcham, "get you out from here, and take another road; and by my word, little is my thankfulness to yourself, or to her that let you in." "You need not send him out for telling me that," said Deirdre, "for as to those three men, I myself saw them last night in a dream, and they hunting upon a hill."

The hunter went away, but in a little time after he began to think to himself how Conchubar, High King of Ulster, was used to lie down at night and to rise up in the morning by himself, without a wife or anyone to speak to; and that if he could see this great beauty it was likely he would bring her home to Emain, and that he himself would get the good-will of the king for telling him there was such a queen to be found on the face of the world.

So he went straight to King Conchubar at Emain Macha, and he sent word in to the King that he had news for him, if he would hear it. The King sent for him to come in. "What is the reason of your journey?" he said. "It is what I have to tell you, King," said the hunter, "that I have seen the greatest beauty that ever was born in Ireland, and I am come to tell you of it."

"Who is this great beauty, and in what place is she to be seen, when she was never seen before you saw her, if you did see her?" "I did see her, indeed," said the hunter, "but no other man can see her, unless he knows from me the place where she is living." "Will you bring me to the place where she is, and you will have a good reward?" said the King. "I will bring you there," said the hunter. "Let you stay with my household tonight," said Conchubar, "and I myself and my people will go with you early on the morning of tomorrow." "I will stay," said the hunter, and he stayed that night in the household of King Conchubar.

Then Conchubar sent to Fergus and to the other chief men of Ulster, and he told them of what he was about to do. Though it was early when the songs and the music of the birds began in the woods, it was earlier yet when Conchubar, king of Ulster, rose up with his little company of near friends, in the fresh spring morning of the fresh and pleasant month of May, and the dew was heavy on every bush and flower as they went out toward the green hill where Deirdre was living.

23. **Usnach.** The royal house of Ulster was called the "Red Branch," being descended from Ross the Red and Maga, a goddess. Usnach, an Ulster warrior, married Maga's daughter, who was also the sister of Conchubar. The sons of Usnach, therefore, set up a blood-feud with their uncle.

86. **Fergus.** By Conchubar's guile he became indirectly responsible for the death of the sons of Usnach. Later, he revenged himself by joining Conchubar's foes, the King and Queen of Connaught, who made war on Ulster for the Brown Bull of Cuailgne, the subject of a great Celtic epic saga in which are recorded the deeds of Cuchulain. See note on this war, page 71, line 35.

But many a young man of them that had a light, glad, leaping step when they set out, had but a tired, slow, failing step before the end, because of the length and the roughness of the way. "It is down there below," said the hunter, "in the house in that valley, the woman is living, but I myself will not go nearer it than this."

Conchubar and his troop went down then to the green hillock where Deirdre was, and they knocked at the door of the house. Levarcham called out that neither answer nor opening would be given to anyone at all, and that she did not want disturbance put on herself or her house. "Open," said Conchubar, "in the name of the High King of Ulster." When Levarcham heard Conchubar's voice, she knew there was no use trying to keep Deirdre out of sight any longer, and she rose up in haste and let in the King, and as many of his people as could follow him.

When the King saw Deirdre before him, he thought in himself that he never saw in the course of the day, or in the dreams of the night, a creature so beautiful, and he gave her his full heart's weight of love there and then. It is what he did; he put Deirdre up on the shoulders of his men, and she herself and Levarcham were brought away to Emain Macha.

With the love that Conchubar had for Deirdre, he wanted to marry her with no delay, but when her leave was asked, she would not give it, for she was young yet, and she had no knowledge of the duties of a wife, or the ways of a king's house. And when Conchubar was pressing her hard, she asked him to give her a delay of a year and a day. He said he would give her that, though it was hard for him, if she would give him her certain promise to marry him at the year's end. She did that, and Conchubar got a woman teacher for her, and nice, fine, pleasant, modest maidens to be with her at her lying down and at her rising up, to be companions to her. And Deirdre grew wise in the works of a young girl, and in the understanding of a woman; and if anyone at all looked at her face, whatever color she was before that, she would blush crimson red. And it is what Conchubar thought, that he never saw with the eyes of his body a creature that pleased him so well.

One day Deirdre and her companions were out on a hill near Emain Macha, looking around them in the pleasant sunshine, and they saw three men walking together. Deirdre was looking at the men and wondering at them, and when they came near, she remembered the talk of the hunter, and the three men she saw in her dream, and she thought to herself that these were the three sons of Usnach, and that this was Naoise, that had his head and shoulders above all the men of Ireland. The three brothers went by without turning their eyes at all upon the young girls on the hillside, and they were singing as they went, and whoever heard the low singing of the sons of Usnach, it was enchantment and music to them, and every cow that was being milked and heard it, gave two-thirds more of milk. And it is what happened, that love for Naoise came into the heart of Deirdre, so that she could not but follow him. She gathered up her skirt and went after the three men that had gone past the foot of the hill, leaving her companions there after her.

But Ainnle and Ardan had heard talk of the young girl that was at Conchubar's court, and it is what they thought, that if Naoise their brother would see her, it is for himself he would have her, for she was not yet married to the King. So when they saw Deirdre coming after them, they said to one another to hasten their steps, for they had a long road to travel, and the dusk of night coming on. They did so, and Deirdre saw it, and she cried out after them, "Naoise, son of Usnach, are you going to leave me?" "What cry was that came to my ears, that it is not well for me to answer, and not easy for me to refuse?" said Naoise. "It was nothing but the cry of Conchubar's wild ducks," said his brothers; "but let us quicken our steps

and hasten our feet, for we have a long road to travel, and the dusk of the evening coming on." They did so, and they were widening the distance between themselves and her.

Then Deirdre cried, "Naoise! Naoise! son of Usnach, are you going to leave me?" "What cry was it that came to my ears and struck my heart, that it is not well for me to answer, or easy for me to refuse?" said Naoise. "Nothing but the cry of Conchubar's wild geese," said his brothers; "but let us quicken our steps and hasten our feet, for the darkness of night is coming on." They did so, and were widening the distance between themselves and her.

Then Deirdre cried the third time, "Naoise! Naoise! Naoise! son of Usnach, are you going to leave me?" "What sharp, clear cry was that, the sweetest that ever came to my ears, and the sharpest that ever struck my heart, of all the cries I ever heard?" said Naoise. "What is it but the scream of Conchubar's lake swans," said his brothers. "That was the third cry of some person beyond there," said Naoise, "and I swear by my hand of valor," he said, "I will go no farther until I see where the cry comes from." So Naoise turned back and met Deirdre, and Deirdre and Naoise kissed one another three times, and she gave a kiss to each of his brothers. And with the confusion that was on her, a blaze of red fire came upon her, and her color came and went as quickly as the aspen by the stream. And it is what Naoise thought to himself, that he never saw a woman so beautiful in his life; and he gave Deirdre, there and then, the love that he never gave to living thing, to vision, or to creature, but to herself alone.

Then he lifted her high on his shoulder, and he said to his brothers to hasten their steps; and they hastened them.

"Harm will come of this," said the young men. "Although there should harm come," said Naoise, "I am willing to be in disgrace while I live. We will go with her to another province, and there is not in Ireland a king who will not give us a welcome." So they called their people, and that night they set out with three times fifty men, and three times fifty women, and three times fifty greyhounds, and Deirdre in their midst.

They were a long time after that shifting from one place to another all around Ireland, from Essruadh in the South, to Beinn Etair in the East again, and it is often they were in danger of being destroyed by Conchubar's devices. And one time the Druids raised a wood before them, but Naoise and his brothers cut their way through it. But at last they got out of Ulster and sailed to the country of Alban, and settled in a lonely place; and when hunting on the mountains failed them, they fell upon the cattle of the men of Alban, so that these gathered together to make an end of them. But the sons of Usnach called to the King of Scotland, and he took them into his friendship, and they gave him their help when he went out into battles or to war.

But all this time they had never spoken to the King of Deirdre, and they kept her with themselves, not to let anyone see her, for they were afraid they might get their death on account of her, she being so beautiful.

But it chanced very early, one morning, the King's steward came to visit them, and he found his way into the house where Naoise and Deirdre were, and there he saw them asleep beside one another. He went back then to the King, and he said: "Up to this time there has never been found a woman that would be a fitting wife for you; but there is a woman on the shore of Loch Ness now, is well worthy of you, King of the East. And what you have to do is to make an end of Naoise, for it is of his wife I am speaking." "I will not do that," said the King; "but go to her," he said, "and bid her to come

64. **Essruadh**, the falls of Ballyshannon in County Donegal. 65. **Beinn Etair**, the Hill of Howth, near Dublin. 72. **country of Alban**, the Highlands of northwest Scotland. 73. **lonely place**, Loch Etive (Eitche), a deep ocean bay in the coast of Argyll (see page 58, line 12). 98. **Loch Ness**, a lake in the heart of the Highlands of Inverness.

and see me secretly." The steward brought her that message, but Deirdre sent him away, and all that he had said to her, she told it to Naoise afterwards. Then when she would not come to him, the King sent the sons of Usnach into every hard fight, hoping they would get their death, but they won every battle, and came back safe again.

And after a while they went to Loch Eitche, near the sea, and they were left to themselves there for a while in peace and quietness. And they settled and made a dwelling-house for themselves by the side of Loch Ness, and they could kill the salmon of the stream from out their own door, and the deer of the gray hills from out their window. But when Naoise went to the court of the King, his clothes were splendid among the great men of the army of Scotland: a cloak of bright purple, rightly shaped, with a fringe of bright gold; a coat of satin with fifty hooks of silver; a brooch on which were a hundred polished gems; a gold-hilted sword in his hand, two blue-green spears of bright points, a dagger with the color of yellow gold on it, and a hilt of silver. But the two children they had, Gaiar and Aebgreine, they gave into the care of Manannan, Son of the Sea. And he cared them well in Emhain of the Apple Trees, and he brought Bobaras the poet to give learning to Gaiar. And Aebgreine of the Sunny Face he gave in marriage afterwards to Rinn, son of Eochaidh Juil of the Land of Promise.

Now it happened, after a time, that a very great feast was made by Conchubar, in Emain Macha, for all the great among his nobles, so that the whole company were easy and pleasant together. The musicians stood up to play their songs and to give poems, and they gave out the branches of relationship and of kindred. These are the names of the poets that were in Emain at the time: Cathbad the Druid, son of Conall, son of Rudraige; Geanann of the Bright Face, son of Cathbad; Ferceirtne, and Geanann Black-Knee, and many others, and Sencha, son of Ailell.

They were all drinking and making merry until Conchubar, the King, raised his voice and spoke aloud, and it is what he said: "I desire to know from you, did you ever see a better house than this house of Emain, or a hearth better than my hearth in any place you were ever in?" "We did not," they said. "If that is so," said Conchubar, "do you know of anything at all that is wanting to you?" "We know of nothing," said they. "That is not so with me," said Conchubar. "I know of a great want that is on you, the want of the three best candles of the Gael, the three noble sons of Usnach, that ought not to be away from us for the sake of any woman in the world, Naoise, Ainnle, and Ardan; for surely they are the sons of a king, and they would defend the High Kingship against the best men of Ireland."

"If we had dared," said they, "it is long ago we would have said it, and more than that, the province of Ulster would be equal to any other province in Ireland, if there was no Ulsterman in it but those three alone, for it is lions they are in hardness and in bravery."

"If that is so," said Conchubar, "let us send word by a messenger to Alban, and to the dwelling-place of the sons of Usnach, to ask them back again." "Who will go there with the message?" said they all. "I cannot know that," said Conchubar, "for there is *geasa*, that is, bonds, on Naoise not to come back with any man only one

6. **the King sent.** King David caused the death of Uriah by the same tactics. See II Samuel xi, 33. **Manannan, Son of the Sea.** Manannan MacLir was the Celtic Proteus, or Old Man of the Sea. In his domain lay the Islands of the Blessed, to which fortunate warriors went. Avilion, or Avalon, to which Arthur went, was such an island. Here the island is called Emhain, and in it are many heroes of the past.

48. **branches of relationship,** etc. Compare with this passage both the opening passage in *Beowulf*, which gives the genealogy of the Danish royal house, and the end of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* for the year 755 A.D. (page II-284). 77. **High Kingship,** a nominal title as the kingdoms of Ireland were independent. 94. **geasa,** a superstition that under certain conditions a man must do certain things. Each man had different and peculiar *geasa*.

of the three, Conall Cearnach, or Fergus, or Cuchulain, and I will know now," said he, "which one of those three loves me best."

Then he called Conall to one side, and he asked him, "What would you do with me if I should send you for the sons of Usnach, and if they were destroyed through me—a thing I do not mean to do?" "As I am not going to undertake it," said Conall, "I will say that it is not one alone I would kill, but any Ulsterman I would lay hold of that had harmed them would get shortening of life from me and the sorrow of death." "I see well," said Conchubar, "you are no friend of mine," and he put Conall away from him.

Then he called Cuchulain to him, and asked him the same as he did the other. "I give my word, as I am not going," said Cuchulain, "if you want that of me, and that you think to kill them when they come, it is not one person alone that would die for it, but every Ulsterman I could lay hold of would get shortening of life from me and the sorrow of death." "I see well," said Conchubar, "that you are no friend of mine." And he put Cuchulain from him.

And then he called Fergus to him, and asked him the same question, and Fergus said, "Whatever may happen, I promise your blood will be safe from me, but besides yourself there is no Ulsterman that would try to harm them, and that I would lay hold of, but I would give him shortening of life and the sorrow of death." "I see well," said Conchubar, "it is yourself must go for them, and it is tomorrow you must set out, for it is with you they will come, and when you are coming back to us westward, I put you under bonds to go first to the fort of Borach, son of Cainte, and give me your word now that as soon as you get there, you will send on the sons of Usnach to Emain, whether it be day or night at the time." After that the two of them went in together, and Fergus told all the company how it was under his charge they were to be put.

Then Conchubar went to Borach and asked had he a feast ready prepared for him. "I have," said Borach, "but although I was able to make it ready, I was not able to bring it to Emain." "If that is so," said Conchubar, "give it to Fergus when he comes back to Ireland, for it is *geasa* on him not to refuse your feast." Borach promised he would do that, and so they wore away that night.

So Fergus set out in the morning, and he brought no guard nor helpers with him, but himself and his two sons, Fair-Haired Iollan, and Rough-Red Buinne, and Cuillean, the shield-bearer, and the shield itself. They went on till they got to the dwelling-place of the sons of Usnach, and to Loch Eitche in Alba. It is how the sons of Usnach lived: they had three houses; and the house where they made ready the food, it is not there they would eat it, and the house where they would eat it, it is not there they would sleep.

When Fergus came to the harbor he let a great shout out of him. And it is how Naoise and Deirdre were: they had a chessboard between them, and they playing on it. Naoise heard the shout, and he said, "That is the shout of a man of Ireland." "It is not, but the cry of a man of Alban," said Deirdre. She knew at the first it was Fergus gave the shout, but she denied it. Then Fergus let another shout out of him. "That is an Irish shout," said Naoise again. "It is not, indeed," said Deirdre; "let us go on playing." Then Fergus gave the third shout, and the sons of Usnach knew this time it was the shout of Fergus, and Naoise said to Ardan to go out and meet him. Then Deirdre told him that she herself knew

1. **Conall Cearnach, or Fergus, or Cuchulain.** These three were the most famous warriors of Conchubar's troop. 46. **fort of Borach.** Dun Borach, or Dun Warry, was situated on the Headland of Torr, where the strait between Ireland and Scotland is only twelve miles wide.

56. **feast ready**, etc. Among their other obligations the king's chief warriors had to care for him when he visited them at their fortress homes. In fact, they often sent the equivalent of the feast he would eat at their home to the fortress of the king, as a kind of feudal tax or levy. 80. **When Fergus**, etc. See note on line 59, page 54.

at the first shout that it was Fergus. "Why did you deny it, then, Queen?" said Naoise. "Because of a vision I saw last night," said Deirdre. "Three birds I saw coming to us from Emain Macha, and three drops of honey in their mouths, and they left them with us, and three drops of our blood they brought away with them." "What meaning do you put on that, Queen?" said Naoise. "It is," said Deirdre, "Fergus that is coming to us with a message of peace from Conchubar, for honey is not sweeter than a message of peace sent by a lying man." "Let that pass," said Naoise. "Is there anything in it but troubled sleep and the melancholy of woman? And it is a long time Fergus is in the harbor. Rise up, Ardan, to be before him, and bring him with you here."

And Ardan went down to meet him, and gave a fond kiss to himself and to his two sons. And it is what he said: "My love to you, dear comrades." After that he asked news of Ireland, and they gave it to him, and then they came to where Naoise and Ainnle and Deirdre were, and they kissed Fergus and his two sons, and they asked news of Ireland from them. "It is the best news I have for you," said Fergus, "that Conchubar, King of Ulster, has sworn by the earth beneath him, by the high heaven above him, and by the sun that travels to the west, that he will have no rest by day nor sleep by night if the sons of Usnach, his own foster-brothers, will not come back to the land of their home and the country of their birth; and he has sent us to ask you there." "It is better for them to stop here," said Deirdre, "for they have a greater sway in Scotland than Conchubar himself has in Ireland." "One's own country is better than any other thing," said Fergus, "for no man can have any pleasure, however great his good luck and his way of living, if he does not see his own country every day." "That is true," said Naoise, "for Ireland is dearer to myself than Alban, though I would get more in Alban than in Ireland." "It will be safe for you to come with me," said Fergus. "It will be safe indeed," said Naoise, "and we will go with you to Ireland; and though there were no trouble beneath the sun, but a man to be far from his own land, there is little delight in peace and a long sleep to a man that is an exile. It is a pity for the man that is an exile; it is little his honor, it is great his grief, for it is he will have his share of wandering."

It was not with Deirdre's will Naoise said that, and she was greatly against going with Fergus. And she said: "I had a dream last night of the three sons of Usnach, and they bound and put in the grave by Conchubar of the Red Branch." But Naoise said: "Lay down your dream, Deirdre, on the heights of the hills, lay down your dream on the sailors of the sea, lay down your dream on the rough gray stones, for we will give peace and we will get it from the king of the world and from Conchubar." But Deirdre spoke again, and it is what she said: "There is the howling of dogs in my ears; a vision of the night is before my eyes; I see Fergus away from us; I see Conchubar without mercy in his dun; I see Naoise without strength in battle; I see Ainnle without his loud-sounding shield; I see Ardan without shield or breastplate, and the Hill of Atha without delight. I see Conchubar asking for blood; I see Fergus caught with hidden lies; I see Deirdre crying with tears, I see Deirdre crying with tears."

"A thing that is unpleasing to me, and that I would never give in to," said Fergus, "is to listen to the howling of dogs and to the dreams of women;

39. **foster-brothers.** In early Ireland children of one family were often sent to be reared in another family. The resulting foster-relationships were considered sacred and binding. Conchubar has apparently brought up his sister's sons, but treats them as foster-brothers.

68. **I had a dream,** etc., the beginning of the lyric laments of Deirdre, which should all be compared with the laments in Part IV of *Beowulf*, and Maurya's lamentation over the body of her dead son in Synge's *Riders to the Sea* (page II-243). 72. **Red Branch.** See note on line 23, page 55. 78. **king of the world.** Whether he means a god or a human being is uncertain. Perhaps it is the Roman Emperor. 85. **dun,** fortress. 88. **Hill of Atha,** a considerable hilly range near Emain Macha.

and since Conchubar, the High King, has sent a message of friendship, it would not be right for you to refuse it." "It would not be right, indeed," said Naoise, "and we will go with you tomorrow." And Fergus gave his word, and he said, "If all the men of Ireland were against you, it would not profit them, for neither shield nor sword nor a helmet itself would be any help or protection to them against you, and I myself to be with you." "That is true," said Naoise, "and we will go with you to Ireland."

They spent the night there until morning, and then they went where the ships were, and they went on the sea, and a good many of their people with them, and Deirdre looked back on the land of Alban, and it is what she said:

"My love to you, O land to the east, and it goes ill with me to leave you; for it is pleasant are your bays and your harbors and your wide, flowery plains and your green-sided hills; and little need was there for us to leave you." And she made this complaint:

"Dear to me is that land, that land to the east, Alban, with its wonders; I would not have come from it hither but that I came with Naoise.

"Dear to me Dun Fiodhaigh and Dun Fionn; dear is the dun above them; dear to me Inis Droignach; dear to me Dun Suibhne.

"O Coill Cuan! Ochone! Coil Cuan! where Ainnle used to come. My grief! it was short I thought his stay there with Naoise in Western Alban. Glen Laoi, O Glen Laoi, where I used to sleep under soft coverings; fish and venison and badger's flesh, that was my portion in Glen Laoi.

"Glen Masan, my grief! Glen Masan! high its hart's-tongue, bright its stalks; we were rocked to pleasant sleep over the wooded harbor of Masan.

"Glen Archan, my grief! Glen Archan, the straight valley of the pleasant ridge; never was there a young man more light-hearted than my Naoise used to be in Glen Archan.

"Glen Eitche, my grief! Glen Eitche, it was there I built my first house; beautiful were the woods on our rising; the home of the sun is Glen Eitche.

"Glen-da-Rua, my grief! Glen-da-Rua, my love to every man that belongs to it; sweet is the voice of the cuckoo on the bending branch on the hill above Glen-da-Rua.

"Dear to me is Droighin over the fierce strand; dear are its waters over the clean sand. I would never have come out from it at all but that I came with my beloved!"

After she had made that complaint they came to Dun Borach, and Borach gave three fond kisses to Fergus and to the sons of Usnach along with him. It was then Borach said he had a feast laid out for Fergus, and that it was *geasa* for him to leave it until he would have eaten it. But Fergus reddened with anger from head to foot, and it is what he said: "It is a bad thing you have done, Borach, laying out a feast for me, and Conchubar to have made me give my word that as soon as I would come to Ireland, whether it would be by day or in the nighttime, I would send on the sons of Usnach to Emain Macha." "I hold you under bonds," said Borach, "to stop and use the feast."

Then Fergus asked Naoise what should he do about the feast. "You must choose," said Deirdre, "whether you will forsake the children of Usnach or the feast, and it would be better for you to refuse the feast than to forsake the sons of Usnach." "I will not forsake them," said he, "for I will send my two sons, Fair-Haired Iollan and Rough-Red Buinne, with them,

22. **My love to you**, etc., the first important lament of Deirdre. Notice the vivid appreciation of nature, and the invocation of beloved natural objects in the wilds of Scotland as if they heard and understood.
33. **Dun Fiodhaigh**, etc. The localities Deirdre mentions are in general identified as follows: Dun Fiodhaigh (the Fort of the Thicket), Dun Fionn (the White Fort), and Dun Suibhne are all near Loch Etive. Inis Droignach is a rocky headland near Bunawe, Argyll. Coil Cuan (the Wood of Cuan), Glen Laoi (Glen Loch), Glen Masan (the head of Loch Striven), Glen Archan (Glen Orchy), Glen Eitche, and Glen-da-Rua (Glen Darill) are all woody valleys in Argyll. Droighin is possibly the Crinan River, which flows into Jura Sound. Scott and Stevenson knew this country well. It was outside of Jura Sound that Stevenson sailed when he was a boy. Its memories are enshrined in his poem "Sing Me a Song of a Lad That Is Gone" (page 598).
37. **Ochone!** alas.

to Emain Macha." "On my word," said Naoise, "that is a great deal to do for us; for up to this no other person ever protected us but ourselves." And he went out of the place in great anger; and Ainnle, and Ardan, and Deirdre, and the two sons of Fergus followed him, and they left Fergus dark and sorrowful after them. But for all that, Fergus was full sure that if all the provinces of Ireland would go into one council, they would not consent to break the pledge he had given.

As for the sons of Usnach, they went on their way by every short road, and Deirdre said to them, "I will give you a good advice, Sons of Usnach, though you may not follow it." "What is that advice, Queen?" said Naoise. "It is," said she, "to go to Rechrainn, between Ireland and Scotland, and to wait there until Fergus has done with the feast; and that will be the keeping of his word to Fergus, and it will be the lengthening of your lives to you." "We will not follow that advice," said Naoise; and the children of Fergus said it was little trust she had in them, when she thought they would not protect her, though their hands might not be so strong as the hands of the sons of Usnach; and besides that, Fergus had given them his word. "Alas! it is sorrow came on us with the word of Fergus," said Deirdre, "and he to forsake us for a feast"; and she made this complaint:

"It is grief to me that ever I came from the east on the word of the unthinking son of Rogh. It is only lamentations I will make. Och! it is very sorrowful my heart is!

"My heart is heaped up with sorrow; it is tonight my great hurt is. My grief! my dear companions, the end of your days is come."

And it is what Naoise answered her: "Do not say that in your haste, Deirdre, more beautiful than the sun. Fergus would never have come for us eastward to bring us back to be destroyed."

And Deirdre said, "My grief! I think it too far for you, beautiful sons of Usnach, to have come from Alban of the rough grass; it is lasting will be its lifelong sorrow."

After that they went forward to Finncairn of the watch-tower on sharp-peaked Slieve Fuad, and Deirdre stayed after them in the valley, and sleep fell on her there.

When Naoise saw that Deirdre was left after them, he turned back as she was rising out of her sleep, and he said, "What made you wait after us, Queen?" "Sleep that was on me," said Deirdre; "and I saw a vision in it." "What vision was that?" said Naoise. "It was," she said, "Fair-Haired Iollan that I saw without his head on him, and Rough-Red Buinne with his head on him; and it is without help of Rough-Red Buinne you were, and it is with the help of Fair-Haired Iollan you were." And she made this complaint:

"It is a sad vision has been shown to me, of my four tall, fair, bright companions; the head of each has been taken from him, and no help to be had one from another."

But when Naoise heard this he reproached her, and said, "O fair, beautiful woman, nothing does your mouth speak but evil. Do not let the sharpness and the great misfortune that come from it fall on your friends." And Deirdre answered him with kind, gentle words, and it is what she said: "It would be better to me to see harm come on any other person than upon any one of you three, with whom I have traveled over the seas and over the wide plains; but when I look on you, it is only Buinne I can see safe and whole, and I know by that his life will be longest among you; and indeed it is I that am sorrowful tonight."

After that they came forward to the high willows, and it was then Deirdre said: "I see a cloud in the air, and it

20. **Rechrainn**, the Island of Rathlin, off the coast of Antrim in the North Channel, between Ireland and Scotland. 40. **son of Rogh**, Fergus.

58. **Finncairn**, a pile of rocks on the crest of Slieve Fuad, which is itself a long mountainous range to the west and northwest of Slieve Gullon in the southern half of County Armagh in Ireland. From its crest Emain Macha and its plain were visible. *Slieve* is the Celtic word for *mountain*.

is a cloud of blood; and I would give you a good advice, Sons of Usnach," she said. "What is that advice?" said Naoise. "To go to Dundealgan where Cuchulain is, until Fergus has done with the feast, and to be under the protection of Cuchulain, for fear of the treachery of Conchubar." "Since there is no fear on us, we will not follow that advice," said Naoise. And Deirdre complained, and it is what she said:

"O Naoise, look at the cloud I see above us in the air; I see a cloud over green Macha, cold and deep red like blood. I am startled by the cloud that I see here in the air; a thin, dreadful cloud that is like a clot of blood. I give a right advice to the beautiful sons of Usnach not to go to Emain tonight, because of the danger that is over them. We will go to Dundealgan, where the Hound of the Smith is; we will come tomorrow from the south along with the Hound, Cuchulain."

But Naoise said in his anger to Deirdre, "Since there is no fear on us, we will not follow your advice." And Deirdre turned to the grandsons of Rogh, and it is what she said: "It is seldom until now, Naoise, that yourself and myself were not of the one mind. And I say to you, Naoise, that you would not have gone against me like this the day Manannan gave me the cup in the time of his great victory."

After that they went on to Emain Macha. "Sons of Usnach," said Deirdre, "I have a sign by which you will know if Conchubar is going to do treachery on you." "What sign is that?" said Naoise. "If you are let come into the house where Conchubar is, and the nobles of Ulster, then Conchubar is not going to do treachery on you. But if it is in the House of the Red Branch you are put, then he is going to do treachery on you."

After that they came to Emain Macha, and they took the handwood and struck the door, and the doorkeeper asked who was there. They told him that it was the sons of Usnach, and Deirdre, and the two sons of Fergus were there.

When Conchubar heard that, he called his stewards and serving men to him, and he asked them how was the House of the Red Branch for food and for drink. They said that if all the seven armies of Ulster would come there, they would find what would satisfy them. "If that is so," said Conchubar, "bring the sons of Usnach into it."

It was then Deirdre said, "It would have been better for you to follow my advice, and never to have come to Emain, and it would be right for you to leave it, even at this time." "We will not," said Fair-Haired Iollan, "for it is not fear or cowardliness was ever seen on us, but we will go to the house." So they went on to the House of the Red Branch, and the stewards and the serving-men with them, and well-tasting food was served to them, and pleasant drinks, till they were all glad and merry, except only Deirdre and the sons of Usnach; for they did not use much food or drink, because of the length and the greatness of their journey from Dun Borach to Emain Macha. Then Naoise said, "Give the chessboard to us till we go playing." So they gave them the chessboard and they began to play.

It was just at that time Conchubar was asking, "Who will I send that will bring me word of Deirdre, and that will tell me if she has the same appearance and the same shape she had before, for if she has, there is not a woman in the world has a more beautiful shape or appearance than she has, and I will bring her out with edge of blade and

22. **Dundealgan**, the stronghold of Cuchulain. Its remains are known as Castletown Moat, and are situated one mile inland from modern Dundalk. 23. **Hound of the Smith**, the literal meaning of *Cuchulain*. When he was a little boy, Setanta, as he was then called, killed the fierce hound of Chulain, the smith of Conchubar. In repayment the boy promised to take the hound's place. Hence he was called Cuchulain. 35. **Manannan**. During their flight from Ireland Naoise and Deirdre had stopped at a magic island and had committed their two children to Manannan Mac Lir, god of the sea, for protection. He gave Naoise a magic sword and Deirdre a cup. The great victory referred to here is not known. See note on line 33, page 58.

46. **House of the Red Branch.** Conchubar lived in the Royal House, but kept the spoils of his enemies in the House of the Red Branch. Hence it was ominous to be lodged in the latter.

point of sword in spite of the sons of Usnach, good though they be. But if not, let Naoise have her for himself." "I myself will go there," said Levarcham, "and I will bring you word of that." And it is how it was, Deirdre was dearer to her than any other person in the world; for it was often she went through the world looking for Deirdre and bringing news to her and from her. So Levarcham went over to the House of the Red Branch, and near it she saw a great troop of armed men, and she spoke to them, but they made her no answer, and she knew by that it was none of the men of Ulster were in it, but men from some strange country that Conchubar's messengers had brought to Emain.

And then she went in where Naoise and Deirdre were, and it is how she found them, the polished chessboard between them, and they playing on it; and she gave them fond kisses, and she said: "You are not doing well to be playing; and it is to bring Conchubar word if Deirdre has the same shape and appearance she used to have that he sent me here now; and there is grief on me for the deed that will be done in Emain tonight, treachery that will be done, and the killing of kindred, and the three bright candles of the Gael to be quenched, and Emain will not be the better of it to the end of life and time"; and she made this complaint sadly and wearily:

"My heart is heavy for the treachery that is being done in Emain this night; on account of this treachery, Emain will never be at peace from this out.

"The three that are most king-like today under the sun; the three best of all that live on the earth, it is grief to me tonight they to die for the sake of any woman. Naoise and Ainnle, whose deeds are known, and Ardan, their brother; treachery is to be done on the young, bright-faced three; it is not I that am not sorrowful tonight."

When she had made this complaint, Levarcham said to the sons of Usnach and to the children of Fergus to shut close the doors and the windows of the house and to do bravery. "And, oh, sons of Fergus," she said, "defend your charge and your care bravely till Fergus comes, and you will have praise and a blessing for it." And she cried with many tears, and she went back to where Conchubar was, and he asked news of Deirdre of her. And Levarcham said, "It is good news and bad news I have for you." "What news is that?" said Conchubar. "It is the good news," she said, "the three sons of Usnach to have come to you and to be over there, and they are the three that are bravest and mightiest in form and in looks and in countenance, of all in the world; and Ireland will be yours from this out, since the sons of Usnach are with you; and the news that is worst with me is, the woman that was best of the women of the world in form and in looks, going out of Emain, is without the form and without the appearance she used to have."

When Conchubar heard that, much of his jealousy went backward, and he was drinking and making merry for a while, until he thought on Deirdre again the second time, and on that he asked, "Who will I get to bring me word of Deirdre?" But he did not find anyone would go there. And then he said to Gelban, the merry, pleasant son of the King of Lochlann: "Go over and bring me word if Deirdre has the same shape and the same appearance she used to have, for if she has, there is not on the ridge of the world or on the waves of the earth a woman more beautiful than herself."

So Gelban went to the House of the Red Branch, and he found the doors and the windows of the fort shut, and fear came on him. And it is what he said: "It is not an easy road for anyone that would get to the sons of Usnach, for I think there is very great anger on them." And after that he found a

17. **from some strange country.** Conchubar sought to avoid the appearance of treachery by bringing in distant allies to kill the Sons of Usnach, as if without his connivance.

88. **King of Lochlann**, one of Conchubar's subordinate chieftains, whose son was being trained at Conchubar's court.

window that was left open by forgetfulness in the house, and he was looking in. Then Deirdre saw him through the window, and when she saw him looking at her, she went into a red blaze of blushes, and Naoise knew that someone was looking at her from the window, and she told him that she saw a young man looking in at them. It is how Naoise was at that time, with a man of the chessmen in his hand, and he made a fair throw over his shoulder at the young man, that put the eye out of his head. The young man went back to where Conchubar was. "You were merry and pleasant going out," said Conchubar, "but you are sad and cheerless coming back." And then Gelban told him the story from beginning to end. "I see well," said Conchubar, "the man that made that throw will be king of the world, unless he has his life shortened. And what appearance is there on Deirdre?" he said. "It is this," said Gelban: "although Naoise put out my eye, I would have wished to stay there looking at her with the other eye, but for the haste you put on me; for there is not in the world a woman is better of shape or of form than herself."

When Conchubar heard that, he was filled with jealousy and with envy, and he bade the men of his army that were with him, and that had been drinking at the feast, to go and attack the place where the sons of Usnach were. So they went forward to the House of the Red Branch, and they gave three great shouts around it, and they put fires and red flames to it. When the sons of Usnach heard the shouts, they asked who those men were that were about the house. "Conchubar and the men of Ulster," they all said together. "Is it the pledge of Fergus you would break?" said Fair-Haired Iollan. "On my word," said Conchubar, "there will be sorrow on the sons of Usnach, Deirdre to be with them." "That is true," said Deirdre; "Fergus has deceived you." "By my oath," said Rough-Red Buinne, "if he betrayed, we will not betray."[22]

It was then Buinne went out and killed three-fifths of the fighting men outside, and put great disturbance on the rest; and Conchubar asked who was there, and who was doing destruction on his men like that. "It is I, myself, Rough-Red Buinne, son of Fergus," said he. "I will give you a good gift if you will leave off," said Conchubar. "What gift is that?" said Rough-Red Buinne. "A hundred of land," said Conchubar. "What besides?" said Rough-Red Buinne. "My own friendship and my counsel," said Conchubar. "I will take that," said Rough-Red Buinne. It was a good mountain that was given him as a reward, but it turned barren in the same night, and no green grew on it again forever, and it used to be called the Mountain of the Share of Buinne.

Deirdre heard what they were saying. "By my word," she said, "Rough-Red Buinne has forsaken you, and, in my opinion, it is like the father the son is." "I give my word," says Fair-Haired Iollan, "that is not so with me; as long as this narrow, straight sword stays in my hand, I will not forsake the sons of Usnach."

After that Fair-Haired Iollan went out, and made three courses around the house, and killed three-fifths of the heroes outside, and he came in again where Naoise was, and he playing chess, and Ainnle with him. So Iollan went out the second time, and made three other courses round the fort, and he brought a lighted torch with him on the lawn, and he went destroying the hosts, so that they dared not come to attack the house. And he was a good son, Fair-Haired Iollan, for he never refused any person on the ridge of the world anything that he had, and he never took wages from any person but only Fergus.

55. **It was then**, etc. It is noticeable that much of the fighting in the Irish sagas is unearthly and magical, when compared with the fighting in *Beowulf*. The contrast is that between the more circumstantial Anglo-Saxon and the more naïve and imaginative Celt. 65. **A hundred of land**, one hundred hides. A hide was a measure of land, varying in Anglo-Saxon and Norman times from eighty to one hundred twenty acres. See *Beowulf*, page 39, line 68.

It was then Conchubar said: "What place is my own son, Fiacra the Fair?" "I am here, High Prince," said Fiacra. "By my word," said Conchubar, "it is on the one night yourself and Iollan were born, and as it is the arms of his father he has with him, let you take my arms with you, that is, my shield, the Ochain, my two spears, and my great sword, the Gorm Glas, the Blue Green—and do bravery and great deeds with them."

Then Fiacra took Conchubar's arms, and he and Fair-Haired Iollan attacked one another, and they made a stout fight, one against the other. But however it was, Fair-Haired Iollan put down Fiacra, so that he made him lie under the shelter of his shield, till it roared for the greatness of the strait he was in; for it was the way with the Ochain, the shield of Conchubar, to roar when the person on whom it would be was in danger; and the three chief waves of Ireland, the Wave of Tuagh, the Wave of Cliodna, and the Wave of Rudraige, roared in answer to it.

It was at that time Conall Cearnach was at Dun Sobairce, and he heard the Wave of Tuagh. "True it is," said Conall, "Conchubar is in some danger, and it is not right for me to be here listening to him."

Conall rose up on that, and he put his arms and his armor on him, and came forward to where Conchubar was at Emain Macha, and he found the fight going on on the lawn, and Fiacra, the son of Conchubar, greatly pressed by Fair-Haired Iollan, and neither the King of Ulster nor any other person dared to go between them. But Conall went aside, behind Fair-Haired Iollan, and thrust his sword through him.

9. **the Ochain.** Celtic heroes, like Anglo-Saxon heroes, had weapons with supernatural powers. Conchubar's shield, the Ochain, came from a queen of the Sea, and it would roar whenever its owner was hard pressed, and the three chief waves of Ireland, near the homes of the three champions of Ulster, would roar in answer. Naoise's magic sword had been given him by the god of the sea, just as Excalibur was given to Arthur by the Lady of the Lake. Neither the specific qualities of Conchubar's sword, Gorm Glas, which means "Blue Green," nor where he got it, are told us. 25. **Wave of Tuagh,** at the mouth of the River Bann, County Derry. 26. **Wave of Cliodna,** in Glandore Harbor, County Cork. **Wave of Rudraige,** in the Bay of Dundrum, County Down. 29. **Dun Sobairce,** Dun Severick, in County Antrim.

"Who is it has wounded me behind my back?" said Fair-Haired Iollan. "Whoever did it, by my hand of valor, he would have got a fair fight, face to face, from myself." "Who are you yourself?" said Conall. "I am Iollan, son of Fergus, and are you yourself Conall?" "It is I," said Conall. "It is evil and it is heavy the work you have done," said Iollan, "and the sons of Usnach under my protection." "Is that true?" said Conall. "It is true, indeed," said Iollan. "By my hand of valor," said Conall, "Conchubar will not get his own son alive from me to avenge it," and he gave a stroke of the sword to Fiacra, so that he struck his head off, and he left them so. The clouds of death came upon Fair-Haired Iollan then, and he threw his arms toward the fortress, and called out to Naoise to do bravery, and after that he died.

It is then Conchubar himself came out and nineteen hundred men with him, and Conall said to him: "Go up now to the doorway of the fort, and see where your sister's children are lying on a bed of trouble." And when Conchubar saw them he said: "You are not sister's children to me; it is not the deed of sister's children you have done me, but you have done harm to me with treachery in the sight of all the men of Ireland." And it is what Ainnle said to him: "Although we took well-shaped, soft-handed Deirdre from you, yet we did a little kindness to you at another time, and this is the time to remember it. That day your ship was breaking up on the sea, and it full of gold and silver, we gave you up our own ship, and ourselves went swimming to the harbor."

But Conchubar said: "If you did fifty good deeds to me, surely this would be my thanks: I would not give you peace, and you in distress, but every great want I could put on you."

And then Ardan said: "We did another little kindness to you, and this is the time to remember it; the day the

79. **And it is what Ainnle said,** etc. Notice the three replies of the sons of Usnach.

speckled horse failed you on the green of Dundealgan, it was we gave you the gray horse that would bring you fast on your road."

But Conchubar said: "If you had done fifty good deeds to me, surely this would be my thanks: I would not give you peace, and you in distress, but every great want I could put on you."

And then Naoise said: "We did you another good deed, and this is the time to remember it; we have put you under many benefits; it is strong our right is to your protection.

"The time when Murcael, son of Brian, fought the seven battles at Beinn Etair, we brought you, without fail, the heads of the sons of the King of the Southeast."

But Conchubar said: "If you had done me fifty good deeds, surely this is my thanks: I would not give you peace in your distress, but every great want I could put upon you.

"Your death is not a death to me now, young sons of Usnach, since he that was innocent fell by you, the third best of the horsemen of Ireland."

Then Deirdre said: "Rise up, Naoise, take your sword, good son of a king, mind yourself well, for it is not long that life will be left in your fair body."

It is then all Conchubar's men came about the house, and they put fires and burning to it. Ardan went out then, and his men, and put out the fires and killed three hundred men. And Ainnle went out in the third part of the night, and he killed three hundred, and did slaughter and destruction on them.

And Naoise went out in the last quarter of the night, and drove away all the army from the house.

He came into the house after that, and it is then Deirdre rose up and said to him: "By my word, it is well you won your way; and do bravery and valor from this out; and it was bad advice you took when you ever trusted Conchubar."

As for the sons of Usnach, after that they made a good protection with their shields, and they put Deirdre in the middle and linked the shields around her, and they gave three leaps out over the walls of Emain, and they killed three hundred men in that sally.

When Conchubar saw that, he went to Cathbad the Druid, and said to him: "Go, Cathbad, to the sons of Usnach, and work enchantment on them; for unless they are hindered they will destroy the men of Ulster forever if they go away in spite of them; and I give the word of a true hero, they will get no harm from me, but let them only make agreement with me."

When Cathbad heard that, he agreed, believing him, and he went to the end of his arts and his knowledge to hinder the sons of Usnach, and he worked enchantment on them, so that he put the likeness of a dark sea about them, with hindering waves. And when Naoise saw the waves rising he put up Deirdre on his shoulder, and it is how the sons of Usnach were, swimming on the ground as they were going out of Emain; yet the men of Ulster did not dare to come near them until their swords had fallen from their hands. But after their swords fell from their hands, the sons of Usnach were taken. And when they were taken, Conchubar asked of the children of Durthacht to kill them. But the children of Durthacht said they would not do that. There was a young man with Conchubar whose name was Maine, and his surname Rough-Hand, son of the king of the fair Norwegians, and it is Naoise had killed his father and his two brothers; Athrac and Triathrach were their names. And he said he himself would kill the sons of Usnach. "If that is so," said Ardan, "kill me the first, for I am younger than my brothers, so that I will not see my brothers killed." "Let him not be killed but myself," said Ainnle. "Let that not be done," said Naoise, "for I have a sword

16. **Beinn Etair.** See note on line 65, page 57.

88. **Maine.** See note on line 17, page 64. Conchubar tries to have foreigners kill the sons of Usnach, in order to avoid a tribal feud, and he finally gets certain Norwegians who have taken part in a blood-feud with Usnach to do his will. 100. **sword.** See note on line 9, page 66. Cf. the magic sword of Grendel in *Beowulf* (page 31, line 92), and the ax of the Green Knight in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (page 118, line 42).

that Manannan, son of Lir, gave me, and the stroke of it leaves nothing after it, track nor trace; and strike the three of us together, and we will die at the one time." "That is well," said they all, "and let you lay down your heads," they said. They did that, and Maine gave a strong quick blow of the sword on the three necks together on the block, and struck the three heads off them with one stroke; and the men of Ulster gave three loud sorrowful shouts, and cried aloud about them there.

As for Deirdre, she cried pitifully, wearily, and tore her fair hair, and she was talking on the sons of Usnach and on Alban, and it is what she said:

"A blessing eastward to Alban from me. Good is the sight of her bays and valleys; pleasant was it to sit on the slopes of her hills, where the sons of Usnach used to be hunting.

"One day, when the nobles of Scotland were drinking with the sons of Usnach, to whom they owed their affection, Naoise gave a kiss secretly to the daughter of the lord of Duntreon. He sent her a frightened deer, wild, and a fawn at its foot; and he went to visit her coming home from the host of Inverness. When myself heard that, my head filled full of jealousy; I put my boat on the waves; it was the same to me to live or to die. They followed me swimming, Ainnle and Ardan, that never said a lie; they turned me back again, two that would give battle to a hundred; Naoise gave me his true word, he swore three times, with his arms as witness, he would never put vexation on me again, until he would go from me to the hosts of the dead.

"Och! if she knew tonight, Naoise to be under a covering of clay, it is she would cry her fill, and it is I would cry along with her."

After she had made this complaint, seeing they were all taken up with one another, Deirdre came forward on the lawn, and she was running round and round, up and down, from one to another, and Cuchulain met her, and she told him the story from first to last, how it had happened to the sons of Usnach. It is sorrowful Cuchulain was for that, for there was not in the world a man was dearer to him than Naoise. And he asked who killed him. "Maine Rough-Hand," said Deirdre. Then Cuchulain went away, sad and sorrowful, to Dundealgan.

After that Deirdre lay down by the grave, and they were digging earth from it, and she made this lament after the sons of Usnach:

"Long is the day without the sons of Usnach; it was never wearisome to be in their company; sons of a king that entertained exiles; three lions of the Hill of the Cave.

"Three darlings of the women of Britain; three hawks of Slieve Cuilenn; sons of a king served by valor, to whom warriors did obedience. The three mighty bears; three lions of the fort of Conrach; three sons of a king who thought well of their praise; three nurslings of the men of Ulster.

"Three heroes not good at homage; their fall is a cause of sorrow; three sons of the sister of a king; three props of the army of Cuailgne.

"Three dragons of Dun Monad, the three valiant men from the Red Branch; I myself will not be living after them, the three that broke hard battles.

"Three that were brought up by Aoife, to whom lands were under tribute; three pillars in the breach of battle; three pupils that were with Scathach.

"Three pupils that were with Uathach; three champions that were lasting in might; three shining sons of Usnach; it is weariness to be without them.

"The High King of Ulster, my first betrothed, I forsook for love of Naoise;

18. **A blessing eastward**, etc., the second important lament of Deirdre. Many of the localities cannot be identified.

64. **lament.** This is really part of the preceding lament. 72. **Slieve Cuilenn**, in County Londonderry. 82. **Cuailgne**, Cooley, in County Louth. 83. **Dun Monad**, a mountain range in Scotland. 88. **Aoife**, a mighty Amazon queen of certain Scottish tribes against whom Cuchulain fought after he had been trained by Scathach. Aoife bore Cuchulain a son, Conlaoch, whom he later killed in battle, not knowing who he was. 90. **Scathach**, a famous woman warrior who lived on a Scottish island, and who trained Cuchulain in the art of war. Her daughter was Uathach.

short my life will be after him; I will make keening at their burial.

"That I would live after Naoise let no one think on the earth; I will not go on living after Ainnle and after Ardan.

"After them I myself will not live; three that would leap through the midst of battle; since my beloved is gone from me I will cry my fill over his grave.

"O young man, digging the new grave, do not make the grave narrow; I will be along with them in the grave, making lamentation and ochones.

"Many the hardship I met with along with the three heroes. I suffered want of house, want of fire; it is myself that used not to be troubled.

"Their three shields and their spears made a bed for me often. O young man, put their three swords close over their grave.

"Their three hounds, their three hawks, will be from this time without huntsmen; three helpers of every battle; three pupils of Conall Cearnach.

"The three leashes of those three hounds have brought a sigh from my heart. It is I had the care of them; the sight of them is a cause of grief.

"I was never one day alone to the day of the making of this grave, though it is often that myself and yourselves were in loneliness.

"My sight is gone from me with looking at the grave of Naoise; it is short till my life will leave me, and those who would have keened me do not live.

"Since it is through me they were betrayed I will be tired out with sorrow; it is a pity I was not in the earth before the sons of Usnach were killed.

"Sorrowful was my journey with Fergus, betraying me to the Red Branch; we were deceived all together with his sweet, flowery words. I left the delights of Ulster for the three heroes that were bravest; my life will not be long, I myself am alone after them.

"I am Deirdre without gladness, and I at the end of my life; since it is grief to be without them, I myself will not be long after them."

After that complaint Deirdre loosed out her hair, and threw herself on the body of Naoise before it was put into the grave and gave three kisses to him, and when her mouth touched his blood, the color of burning sods came into her cheeks, and she rose up like one that had lost her wits, and she went on through the night till she came to where the waves were breaking on the strand. And a fisherman was there and his wife, and they brought her into their cabin and sheltered her, and she neither smiled nor laughed, nor took food, drink, or sleep, nor raised her head from her knees, but was crying always after the sons of Usnach.

But when she could not be found at Emain, Conchubar sent Levarcham to look for her, and to bring her back to his palace, that he might make her his wife. And Levarcham found her in the fisherman's cabin, and she bade her come back to Emain, where she would have protection and riches and all that she would ask. And she gave her this message she brought from Conchubar: "Come up to my house, O branch with the dark eyelashes, and there need be no fear on your fair face, of hatred or of jealousy or of reproach." And Deirdre said: "I will not go up to his house, for it is not land or earth or food I am wanting, or gold or silver or horses, but leave to go to the grave where the sons of Usnach are lying, till I give the three honey kisses to their three white, beautiful bodies." And she made this complaint:

"Make keening for the heroes that were killed on their coming to Ireland; stately they used to be, coming to the house, the three great sons of Usnach.

"The sons of Usnach fell in the fight like three branches that were growing straight and nice, and they destroyed in a heavy storm that left neither bud nor twig of them.

"Naoise, my gentle, well-learned comrade, make no delay in crying him

2. **keening**, lamentations. 14. **ochones**, Celtic exclamations of grief.

93. **Make keening**, etc., the third important lament of Deirdre.

with me; cry for Ardan that killed the wild boars; cry for Ainnle whose strength was great.

"It was Naoise that would kiss my lips, my first man and my first sweetheart; it was Ainnle would pour out my drink; and it was Ardan would lay my pillow.

"Though sweet to you is the mead that is drunk by the soft-living son of Ness, the food of the sons of Usnach was sweeter to me all through my lifetime.

"Whenever Naoise would go out to hunt through the woods or the wide plains, all the meat he would bring back was better to me than honey.

"Though sweet to you are the sounds of pipes and of trumpets, it is truly, I say to the King, I have heard music that is sweeter.

"Delightful to Conchubar, the king, are pipes and trumpets; but the singing of the sons of Usnach was more delightful to me.

"It was Naoise had the deep sound of the waves in his voice; it was the song of Ardan that was good, and the voice of Ainnle toward their green dwelling-place.

"Their birth was beautiful and their blossoming, as they grew to the strength of manhood; sad is the end today, the sons of Usnach to be cut down.

"Dear were their pleasant words, dear their young, high strength; in their going through the plains of Ireland there was a welcome before the coming of their strength.

"Dear their gray eyes that were loved by women; many looked on them as they went. When they went freely searching through the woods, their steps were pleasant on the dark mountain.

"I do not sleep at any time, and the color is gone from my face; there is no sound can give me delight since the sons of Usnach do not come.

"I do not sleep through the night; my senses are scattered away from me; I do not care for food or drink. I have no welcome today for the pleasant drink of nobles, or ease, or comfort, or delight, or a great house, or the palace of a king.

"Do not break the strings of my heart as you took hold of my young youth, Conchubar; though my darling is dead, my love is strong to live. What is country to me, or land, or lordship? What are swift horses? What are jewels and gold? Och! it is I will be lying tonight on the strand like the beautiful sons of Usnach."

So Levarcham went back to Conchubar to tell him what way Deirdre was, and that she would not come with her to Emain Macha.

And when she was gone, Deirdre went out on the strand, and she found a carpenter making an oar for a boat, and making a mast for it, clean and straight, to put up a sail to the wind. And when she saw him making it, she said: "It is a sharp knife you have, to cut the oar so clean and so straight, and if you will give it to me," she said, "I will give you a ring of the best gold in Ireland for it, the ring that belonged to Naoise, and that was with him through the battle and through the fight; he thought much of it in his lifetime; it is pure gold, through and through." So the carpenter took the ring in his hand, and the knife in the other hand, and he looked at them together, and he gave her the knife for the ring, and for her asking and her tears. Then Deirdre went close to the waves, and she said: "Since the other is not with me now, I will spend no more of my lifetime without him." And with that she drove the black knife into her side, but she drew it out again and threw it in the sea to her right hand, the way no one would be blamed for her death.

Then Conchubar came down to the strand and five hundred men along with him, to bring Deirdre away to Emain Macha, but all he found before him was her white body on the ground, and it without life. And it is what he said: "A thousand deaths on the time I brought death on my sister's children;

10. **son of Ness**, Conchubar.

now I am myself without Deirdre, and they themselves are without life.

"They were my sister's children, the three brothers I vexed with blows, Naoise, and Ainnle, and Ardan; they have died along with Deirdre."

And they took her white, beautiful body, and laid it in a grave, and a flagstone was raised over her grave, and over the grave of the sons of Usnach, and their names were written in Ogham, and keening was made for their burial.

And as to Fergus, son of Rogh, he came on the day after the children of Usnach were killed, to Emain Macha. And when he found they had been killed and his pledge to them broken, he himself, and Cormac Conloingeas, Conchubar's own son, and Dubthach, the Beetle of Ulster, with their men, made an attack on Conchubar's house and men, and a great many were killed by them, and Emain Macha was burned and destroyed.

And after doing that, they went into Connaught, to Ailell and to Maeve at Cruachan, and they were made welcome there, and they took service with them and fought with them against Ulster because of the treachery that was done by Conchubar. And that is the way Fergus and the others came to be on the side of the men of Connaught in the war for the Brown Bull of Cuailgne.

And Cathbad laid a curse on Emain Macha, on account of that great wrong. And it is what he said, that none of the race of Conchubar should have the kingdom, to the end of life and time.

And that came true, for the most of Conchubar's sons died in his own lifetime, and when he was near his death, he bade the men of Ulster bring back Cormac Conloingeas out of Cruachan, and give him the kingdom.

So they sent messengers to Cormac, and he set out and his three troops of men with him, and he left his blessing with Ailell and with Maeve, and he promised them a good return for all the kind treatment they had given him. And they crossed the river at Athluain, and there they saw a red woman at the edge of the ford, and she washing her chariot and her harness. And after that they met a young girl coming toward them, and a light-green cloak about her, and a brooch of precious stones at her breast. And Cormac asked her was she coming with them, and she said she was not, and it would be better for himself to turn back, for the ruin of his life was come.

And he stopped for the night at the House of the Two Smiths on the hill of Bruighean Mor, the great dwelling-place.

But a troop of the men of Connaught came about the house in the night, for they were on the way home after destroying and robbing a district of Ulster, and they thought to make an end of Cormac before he would get to Emain.

And it chanced there was a great harper, Craiftine, living close by, and his wife, Sceanb, daughter of Scethern, a Druid of Connaught, loved Cormac Conloingeas, and three times she had gone to meet him at Athluain, and she planted three trees there—Grief, and Dark, and Dumbness.

And there was great hatred and jealousy of Cormac on Craiftine, so when he knew the men of Connaught were going to make an attack on him, he went outside the house with his harp, and played a soft, sleepy tune to him, the way he had not the strength to rouse himself up, and himself and the most of his people were killed. And Amergin, that had gone with the message to him, made his grave and his mound, and the place is called Cluain Duma, the Lawn of the Mound.

C. SEVENTH CENTURY

11. **Ogham**, secret writing of the Druids, which preceded the entrance of Latin writing into Ireland. 21. **the Beetle**, merely an epithet. 28. **Cruachan**, the ancient capital of Connaught, now called Rathcroghan, in County Roscommon. 35. **war for the Brown Bull of Cuailgne.** The subject of the most important Irish saga that has been preserved to us. Ailell and Maeve, king and queen of Connaught, waged war with Conchubar in order to obtain the famous brown bull of Cuailgne. The cause of the war was a simple cattle raid, but its consequences were disastrous for both kingdoms. 46. **Cormac Conloingeas**, a son of Conchubar, who has sided with Ailell and Maeve in the war for the Brown Bull.

54. **Athluain**, Athlone, meaning the Ford of the Loin. Athlone is now a town on the River Shannon.

JOHN MILTON (1608-1674)

Note

The chief ambition of John Milton was to write a great poem, and although his participation in the Civil War and the Commonwealth delayed its realization for twenty years, his determination did not weaken. When the Commonwealth failed in 1658, Milton took up the task of justifying the Puritan ideal in an epic upon the fall of man. Between 1658-1665, though blind, Milton composed *Paradise Lost*, and published it in 1667.

The construction of the complicated plot is masterly, and the significance of the fall of man is heightened by the revolt in heaven, the casting out of Satan, and the creation of the earth. The temptation of Eve, the sin of Adam and Eve, and their expulsion from the Garden of Eden do not, therefore, occupy the whole of the poem. The first two books describe the plight of the fallen angels in hell, and their plot to destroy man, God's new creature on his new creation, earth. In the third book the scene shifts to heaven, where God foretells the downfall of man, and Christ offers to redeem him. The fourth book narrates Satan's arrival in Eden, and describes the happy life of Adam and Eve. In the fifth, sixth, and seventh books the angel Raphael, sent by the Almighty to warn Adam, relates, at his request, the revolt of the angels, the ensuing war in heaven, the triumph of Christ, the casting down to hell of the revolting angels, and the creation of the earth. In the eighth book Adam relates what he remembers since his own creation, and thereafter Raphael departs. In the ninth book Satan secures the fall of man, and in the tenth book Satan returns to hell to lead out his hosts, but all are turned into serpents. God in heaven foretells the ultimate triumph of goodness, and sends the angel Michael to drive Adam and Eve from Eden. In the eleventh and twelfth books Michael foretells to Adam the history of the world as far as the redemption of man, and finally sends Adam and Eve forth on their journey saddened but comforted.

The style of *Paradise Lost*, which has a sustained nobility and beauty that *Beowulf* and *Deirdre* attain only at intervals, is reminiscent of every stage in the development of Milton as a poet. The sonorous tone of its blank verse reminds us that his father was a composer of distinction, and that from boyhood the poet had been educated to play the organ and had constantly heard the best music. Its beautiful pictures of nature go back to those five years after his graduation from the university when the poet lived at his father's country home at Horton, studying the classics, writing his minor poems, and communing with nature. No poet has left us lovelier pictures of the English countryside than has Milton, and in *Paradise Lost* the blind poet recalls again and again in his spiritual vision the scenes so loved in his youth. The tremendous wealth of literary reminiscence in *Paradise Lost* reflects a life dedicated not merely to poetry but to profound scholarship, in spite of public service and failing eyesight. Its keen analysis of character reveals the observations of a lifetime, begun in the seclusion of a quiet home circle, continued through two years of European travel and twenty years of public service in contact with the most vigorous minds of the time in England, and concluded in the reflections of comparative solitude. Finally its profound religious faith in the justice of God arose first of all in the quiet Puritan home, was tested and strengthened during the era of the Commonwealth, and triumphed at last over the defeat of Puritanism by the Restoration in the composition of *Paradise Lost*.

The selection which follows narrates the revolt in heaven. The fifth book opens with a picture of primeval innocence in Eden on the morning after Satan had entered the Garden of Eden and had tempted Eve by night with a deceitful dream. At the command of God, Raphael visits Adam, and, by narrating to him the revolt of Satan and his fate, warns Adam to obey, especially since Adam is free to choose.

PARADISE LOST

BOOK V

THE ARGUMENT

Morning approached, Eve relates to Adam her troublesome dream; he likes it not, yet comforts her; they come forth to their day labors; their morning hymn at the door of their bower. God, to render Man inexcusable, sends Raphael to admonish him of his obedience, of his free estate, of his enemy near at hand, who he is, and why his enemy, and whatever else may avail Adam to know. Raphael comes down to Paradise; his appearance described; his coming discerned by Adam afar off, sitting at the door of his bower; he goes out to meet him, brings him to his lodge, entertains him with the choicest fruits of Paradise, got together by Eve; their discourse at table. Raphael performs his message, minds Adam of his state and of his enemy; relates, at Adam's request, who that enemy is, and how he came to be so, beginning from his first revolt in heaven, and the occasion thereof; how he drew his legions after him to the parts of the North, and there incited them to rebel with him, persuading all but only Abdiel, a seraph, who in argument dissuades and opposes him, then forsakes him.

Now Morn, her rosy steps in the eastern clime
Advancing, sowed the earth with orient pearl,
When Adam waked, so customed; for his sleep
Was aëry light, from pure digestion bred,

2. **orient**, eastern, bright.

And temperate vapors bland, which the only sound 5
Of leaves and fuming rills, Aurora's fan,
Lightly dispersed, and the shrill matin song
Of birds on every bough. So much the more
His wonder was to find unwakened Eve,
With tresses discomposed, and glowing cheek, 10
As through unquiet rest. He, on his side
Leaning half raised, with looks of cordial love
Hung over her enamored, and beheld
Beauty which, whether waking or asleep,
Shot forth peculiar graces; then, with voice 15
Mild as when Zephyrus on Flora breathes,
Her hand soft touching, whispered thus: "Awake,
My fairest, my espoused, my latest found,
Heaven's last, best gift, my ever-new delight!
Awake! the morning shines, and the fresh field 20
Calls us; we lose the prime to mark how spring
Our tended plants, how blows the citron grove,
What drops the myrrh, and what the balmy reed,
How Nature paints her colors, how the bee
Sits on the bloom extracting liquid sweet." 2
Such whispering waked her, but with startled eye
On Adam; whom embracing, this she spake:

"O sole in whom my thoughts find all repose,
My glory, my perfection! glad I see
Thy face, and morn returned; for I this night 30
(Such night till this I never passed) have dreamed,
If dreamed, not, as I oft am wont, of thee,
Works of day past, or morrow's next design,
But of offense and trouble, which my mind
Knew never till this irksome night. Methought 35
Close at mine ear one called me forth to walk,
With gentle voice; I thought it thine. It said,
'Why sleep'st thou, Eve? Now is the pleasant time,
The cool, the silent, save where silence yields
To the night-warbling bird, that, now awake, 40
Tunes sweetest his love-labored song; now reigns
Full-orbed the moon, and, with more pleasing light,
Shadowy sets off the face of things—in vain,
If none regard. Heaven wakes with all his eyes;
Whom to behold but thee, Nature's desire, 45
In whose sight all things joy, with ravishment
Attracted by thy beauty still to gaze?'
I rose as at thy call, but found thee not.
To find thee I directed then my walk;
And on, methought, alone I passed through ways 50
That brought me on a sudden to the tree
Of interdicted knowledge. Fair it seemed,

6. **Aurora**, the Greek goddess of dawn. **fan**, the wind of morning. The literary epic often supplements a natural description with a mythological allusion. 16. **Zephyrus**, the West Wind, personified by the Greeks and Romans. **Flora**, the Roman goddess of flowers. 21. **prime**, the early morning, approximately from 6-9 A.M. Compare this speech with such morning songs, or *aubades*, as Shakespeare's "Hark, Hark, the Lark!" (page 369) and Herrick's "Corinna's Going a-Maying" (page 381).

38. **Why sleep'st thou, Eve?** Compare with Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale" (page 510) and Shelley's "The Indian Serenade" (page 502). 52. **interdicted**, forbidden.

Much fairer to my fancy than by day;
And, as I wondering looked, beside it stood
One shaped and winged like one of those from heaven 55
By us oft seen. His dewy locks distilled
Ambrosia. On that tree he also gazed;
And, 'O fair plant,' said he, 'with fruit surcharged,
Deigns none to ease thy load, and taste thy sweet,
Nor God nor Man? Is knowledge so despised? 60
Or envy, or what reserve forbids to taste?
Forbid who will, none shall from me withhold
Longer thy offered good, why else set here?'
This said, he paused not, but with venturous arm
He plucked, he tasted. Me damp horror chilled 65
At such bold words vouched with a deed so bold;
But he thus, overjoyed: 'O fruit divine,
Sweet of thyself, but much more sweet thus cropped,
Forbidden here, it seems, as only fit
For gods, yet able to make gods of men!
And why not gods of men, since good, the more 71
Communicated, more abundant grows,
The author not impaired, but honored more?
Here, happy creature, fair angelic Eve!
Partake thou also. Happy though thou art, 75
Happier thou may'st be, worthier canst not be.
Taste this, and be henceforth among the gods
Thyself a goddess; not to earth confined,
But sometimes in the air, as we; sometimes
Ascend to heaven, by merit thine, and see
What life the gods live there, and such live thou.' 81
So saying, he drew nigh, and to me held,
Even to my mouth, of that same fruit held part
Which he had plucked. The pleasant savory smell
So quickened appetite that I, methought, 85
Could not but taste. Forthwith up to the clouds
With him I flew, and underneath beheld
The earth outstretched immense, a prospect wide
And various. Wondering at my flight and change
To this high exaltation, suddenly 90
My guide was gone, and I, methought, sunk down,
And fell asleep; but, oh, how glad I waked
To find this but a dream!" Thus Eve her night
Related, and thus Adam answered sad:
"Best image of myself, and dearer half, 95
The trouble of thy thoughts this night in sleep
Affects me equally; nor can I like
This uncouth dream—of evil sprung, I fear;
Yet evil whence? In thee can harbor none,
Created pure. But know that in the soul 100
Are many lesser faculties, that serve
Reason as chief. Among these Fancy next
Her office holds; of all external things,
Which the five watchful senses represent,
She forms imaginations, aëry shapes, 105
Which Reason, joining or disjoining, frames
All what we affirm or what deny, and call
Our knowledge or opinion; then retires
Into her private cell when Nature rests.
Oft, in her absence, mimic Fancy wakes
To imitate her; but, misjoining shapes,
Wild work produces oft, and most in dreams, 112
Ill matching words and deeds long past or late.
Some such resemblances, methinks, I find

57. **Ambrosia**, the substance upon which the Greek gods dined. They drank nectar. 58. **surcharged**, overladen.

98. **uncouth**, unknown, strange. 102. **Fancy**, imagination, emotion, as distinguished from reason and intellect.

Of our last evening's talk in this thy dream, 115
But with addition strange. Yet be not sad.
Evil into the mind of God or Man
May come and go, so unapproved, and leave
No spot or blame behind; which gives me hope
That what in sleep thou didst abhor to dream 120
Waking thou never wilt consent to do.
Be not disheartened, then, nor cloud those looks,
That wont to be more cheerful and serene
Than when fair morning first smiles on the world;
And let us to our fresh employments rise 125
Among the groves, the fountains, and the flowers,
That open now their choicest bosomed smells,
Reserved from night, and kept for thee in store."
So cheered he his fair spouse; and she was cheered,
But silently a gentle tear let fall 130
From either eye, and wiped them with her hair;
Two other precious drops that ready stood,
Each in their crystal sluice, he, ere they fell,
Kissed as the gracious signs of sweet remorse
And pious awe, that feared to have offended. 135
So all was cleared, and to the field they haste.
But first, from under shady arborous roof
Soon as they forth were come to open sight
Of day-spring, and the sun—who, scarce uprisen,
With wheels yet hovering o'er the ocean-brim, 140
Shot parallel to the earth his dewy ray,
Discovering in wide landskip all the east
Of Paradise and Eden's happy plains—
Lowly they bowed, adoring, and began
Their orisons, each morning duly paid
In various style; for neither various style 146
Nor holy rapture wanted they to praise
Their Maker, in fit strains pronounced, or sung
Unmeditated; such prompt eloquence
Flowed from their lips, in prose or numerous verse, 150
More tunable than needed lute or harp
To add more sweetness. And they thus began:
"These are thy glorious works, Parent of good,
Almighty! thine this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair. Thyself how wondrous then! 155
Unspeakable! who sitt'st above these heavens
To us invisible, or dimly seen
In these thy lowest works; yet these declare
Thy goodness beyond thought, and power divine.
Speak, ye who best can tell, ye Sons of Light, 160
Angels—for ye behold him, and with songs
And choral symphonies, day without night,
Circle his throne rejoicing — ye in heaven;
On earth join, all ye creatures, to extol
Him first, him last, him midst, and without end. 165
Fairest of stars, last in the train of night,
If better thou belong not to the dawn,
Sure pledge of day, that crown'st the smiling morn
With thy bright circlet, praise him in thy sphere
While day arises, that sweet hour of prime. 170

115. **our last evening's talk.** Adam had explained to Eve that, while he and she slept, God was worshiped by angelic spirits who rejoiced in contemplating the universe.

145. **orisons**, prayers. 150. **numerous**, numbered, rythmic, poetic. 151. **tunable**, musical. 153. **These are thy glorious works**, etc. Cf. Psalms civ, cxlviii; also Addison's "Hymn" (page 412). Such sustained grandeur is not to be found in either *Beowulf* or *Deirdre*. Cf. with this passage Hrothgar's speech (page 33, lines 87 ff.) or Deirdre's lament (page 61, lines 22 ff.).

Thou sun, of this great world both eye and soul,
Acknowledge him thy greater; sound his praise
In thy eternal course, both when thou climb'st,
And when high noon hast gained, and when thou fall'st.
Moon, that now meet'st the orient sun, now fliest, 175
With the fixed stars, fixed in their orb that flies;
And ye five other wandering fires, that move
In mystic dance, not without song, resound
His praise who out of darkness called up light.
Air, and ye elements, the eldest birth
Of Nature's womb, that in quaternion run 181
Perpetual circle, multiform, and mix
And nourish all things, let your ceaseless change
Vary to our great Maker still new praise.
Ye mists and exhalations, that now rise 185
From hill or steaming lake, dusky or gray,
Till the sun paint your fleecy skirts with gold,
In honor to the world's great Author rise;
Whether to deck with clouds the uncolored sky,
Or wet the thirsty earth with falling showers, 190
Rising or falling, still advance his praise.
His praise, ye winds, that from four quarters blow,
Breathe soft or loud; and wave your tops, ye pines,
With every plant, in sign of worship wave.
Fountains, and ye, that warble, as ye flow, 195
Melodious murmurs, warbling, tune his praise.
Join voices, all ye living souls. Ye birds,
That, singing, up to heaven-gate ascend,
Bear on your wings and in your notes his praise.
Ye that in waters glide, and ye that walk 200
The earth, and stately tread, or lowly creep,
Witness if *I* be silent, morn or even,
To hill or valley, fountain, or fresh shade,
Made vocal by my song, and taught his praise.
Hail, universal Lord! Be bounteous still 205
To give us only good; and, if the night
Have gathered aught of evil, or concealed,
Disperse it, as now light dispels the dark."
So prayed they innocent, and to their thoughts
Firm peace recovered soon, and wonted calm. 210
On to their morning's rural work they haste,
Among sweet dews and flowers, where any row
Of fruit-trees, over-woody, reached too far
Their pampered boughs, and needed hands to check
Fruitless embraces. Or they led the vine 215
To wed her elm; she, spoused, about him twines
Her marriageable arms, and with her brings

176. **fixed stars.** Although in Milton's day the Copernican belief that the earth revolved about the sun was coming into recognition, yet, for the purpose of *Paradise Lost*, Milton adhered chiefly to the ancient Ptolemaic system, in which the earth is the fixed center of the universe, which revolves about it in ten concentric spheres in the following order from within out: the moon, Mercury, Venus, the sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, the fixed stars, the Crystalline sphere, and the Primum Mobile. Beyond the Primum Mobile, in Milton's conception, was the Empyrean, or fiery heaven, the dwelling place of God and the angels. The ancients also believed that the spheres in rotating made celestial music, which mortal ears were rarely, if ever, able to hear.

With this system Milton coupled the medieval conception of the hierarchies of heaven, nine in all; to each one was assigned the care of one of the inner nine Ptolemaic spheres. There were three main divisions of the heavenly host, each containing three ranks. From the lowest to the highest they are: angels, archangels, principalities, powers, virtues, dominions, thrones, cherubim, and seraphim. The Empyrean, or Tenth sphere, was common to all, as the spiritual heaven wherein God resided. Milton slightly changed the hierarchical order by placing the archangels nearest God, and by placing principalities above virtues, but in general the scheme is clear. 181. **quaternion.** The ancients believed that the earth consisted of four elements—earth, air, water, fire—which rose or developed one from the other, so that a ceaseless circle or flux of activity could be discerned.

Her dower, the adopted clusters, to adorn
His barren leaves. Them thus employed beheld
With pity heaven's high King, and to him called 220
Raphael, the sociable spirit, that deigned
To travel with Tobias, and secured
His marriage with the seven-times-wedded maid.
"Raphael," said he, "thou hear'st what stir on earth
Satan, from hell scaped through the darksome gulf, 225
Hath raised in Paradise, and how disturbed
This night the human pair; how he designs
In them at once to ruin all mankind.
Go, therefore; half this day, as friend with friend,
Converse with Adam, in what bower or shade 230
Thou find'st him from the heat of noon retired
To respite his day-labor with repast
Or with repose; and such discourse bring on
As may advise him of his happy state—
Happiness in his power left free to will, 235
Left to his own free will, his will though free
Yet mutable. Whence warn him to beware
He swerve not, too secure; tell him withal
His danger, and from whom; what enemy,
Late fallen himself from heaven, is plotting now 240
The fall of others from like state of bliss.
By violence? no, for that shall be withstood;
But by deceit and lies. This let him know,
Lest, willfully transgressing, he pretend
Surprisal, unadmonished, unforewarned."
So spake the Eternal Father, and fulfilled 246
All justice. Nor delayed the wingéd Saint
After his charge received; but from among
Thousand celestial Ardors, where he stood
Veiled with his gorgeous wings, upspringing light, 250
Flew through the midst of heaven. The angelic choirs,
On each hand parting, to his speed gave way
Through all the empyreal road, till, at the gate
Of heaven arrived, the gate self-opened wide,
On golden hinges turning, as by work 255
Divine the sovran Architect had framed.
From hence—no cloud or, to obstruct his sight,
Star interposed, however small—he sees,
Not unconform to other shining globes,
Earth, and the Garden of God, with cedars crowned 260
Above all hills; as when by night the glass
Of Galileo, less assured, observes
Imagined lands and regions in the moon;
Or pilot from amidst the Cyclades
Delos or Samos first appearing kens 265
A cloudy spot. Down thither prone in flight
He speeds, and through the vast ethereal sky

222. **Tobias, and . . . the seven-times-wedded maid,** a story in the Book of Tobit in the Apocrypha, relating how Tobias, under the guidance of Raphael, put to flight the evil spirit, Asmodeus, who had slain the successive husbands of the daughter of Raguel. Tobit later married her. 236. **free will.** The Puritan doctrine of foreordination and predestination either to salvation or damnation was tempered by the doctrine of free will. The Puritans believed that God knew what Adam would do, but left him free to choose (see lines 524 ff.).

248. **After his charge received,** a Latinism meaning "after having received his charge." Milton frequently employs Latin words and style in his English. 249. **Ardors,** Seraphim. 253. **empyreal,** heavenly, pertaining to the tenth, or highest, heaven. 259. **unconform to,** unlike. 261. **as when,** an elaborate simile characteristic of the literary epic. Appeal here is made to the mind, not to the emotions. 262. **Galileo.** In the *Areopagitica*, written in 1644, Milton says, "There it was that I found and visited the famous Galileo, grown old, a prisoner to the Inquisition, for thinking in astronomy otherwise than the Franciscan and Dominican licensers thought." The meeting probably took place at the astronomer's home and observatory at Arcetri, near Florence. See also *Paradise Lost*, Bk. I, 283-291. 264. **Cyclades,** a large group of islands in the Aegean Sea between Greece and Crete, of which Delos (line 265), sacred to Apollo, is one. 265. **Samos,** not one of the Cyclades, as it is adjacent to Asia Minor near Ephesus. **kens,** perceives.

Sails between worlds and worlds, with steady wing
Now on the polar winds; then with quick fan
Winnows the buxom air, till, within soar 270
Of towering eagles, to all the fowls he seems
A phoenix, gazed by all, as that sole bird,
When, to enshrine his relics in the sun's
Bright temple, to Egyptian Thebes he flies.
At once on the eastern cliff of Paradise
He lights, and to his proper shape returns, 276
A Seraph winged. Six wings he wore to shade
His lineaments divine. The pair that clad
Each shoulder broad came mantling o'er his breast
With regal ornament; the middle pair 280
Girt like a starry zone his waist, and round
Skirted his loins and thighs with downy gold
And colors dipped in heaven; the third his feet
Shadowed from either heel with feathered mail,
Sky-tinctured grain. Like Maia's son he stood, 285
And shook his plumes, that heavenly fragrance filled
The circuit wide. Straight knew him all the bands
Of Angels under watch, and to his state
And to his message high in honor rise;
For on some message high they guessed him bound. 290
Their glittering tents he passed, and now is come
Into the blissful field, through groves of myrrh,

270. **buxom**, yielding, obedient. 272. **phoenix**, a mythological bird, fabled by the Egyptians and early Greeks to be an embodiment of the sun god, whose principal Egyptian temple stood in Thebes. Only one existed at a time, and the life of the bird was five hundred years, at the end of which period it buried itself in a perfumed nest or coffin-like case, from which its successor burst after the case had been consumed by fire. For this reason the phoenix has been used as an emblem of immortality. 285. **grain**, purple. **Maia's son**, Hermes, or Mercury, as the Romans called him.

And flowering odors, cassia, nard, and balm,
A wilderness of sweets; for Nature here
Wantoned as in her prime, and played at will 295
Her virgin fancies, pouring forth more sweet,
Wild above rule or art, enormous bliss.
Him, through the spicy forest onward come,
Adam discerned, as in the door he sat
Of his cool bower, while now the mounted sun 300
Shot down direct his fervid rays, to warm
Earth's inmost womb, more warmth than Adam needs;
And Eve, within, due at her hour, prepared
For dinner savory fruits, of taste to please
True appetite, and not disrelish thirst
Of nectarous drafts between, from milky stream, 306
Berry or grape. To whom thus Adam called:
"Haste hither, Eve, and, worth thy sight, behold
Eastward among those trees what glorious shape
Comes this way moving; seems another morn 310
Risen on mid-noon. Some great behest from heaven
To us perhaps he brings, and will vouchsafe
This day to be our guest. But go with speed,
And what thy stores contain bring forth, and pour
Abundance fit to honor and receive 315
Our heavenly stranger; well we may afford
Our givers their own gifts, and large bestow
From large bestowed, where Nature multiplies
Her fertile growth, and by disburdening grows
More fruitful; which instructs us not to spare." 320
To whom thus Eve: "Adam, earth's hallowed mold,

Of God inspired, small store will serve where store,
All seasons, ripe for use hangs on the stalk,
Save what, by frugal storing, firmness gains
To nourish, and superfluous moist consumes. 325
But I will haste, and from each bough and brake,
Each plant and juiciest gourd, will pluck such choice,
To entertain our Angel-guest, as he,
Beholding, shall confess that here on earth
God hath dispensed his bounties as in heaven." 330
So saying, with dispatchful looks in haste
She turns, on hospitable thoughts intent
What choice to choose for delicacy best,
What order so contrived as not to mix
Tastes, not well joined, inelegant, but bring 335
Taste after taste upheld with kindliest change.
Bestirs her then, and from each tender stalk
Whatever earth, all-bearing mother, yields
In India east or west, or middle shore
In Pontus or the Punic coast, or where
Alcinöus reigned, fruit of all kinds, in coat 341
Rough or smooth rined, or bearded husk, or shell,
She gathers, tribute large, and on the board
Heaps with unsparing hand. For drink the grape
She crushes, inoffensive must, and meaths 345
From many a berry, and from sweet kernels pressed
She tempers dulcet creams—nor these to hold
Wants her fit vessels pure; then strews the ground
With rose and odors from the shrub unfumed.
Meanwhile our primitive great Sire, to meet 350
His godlike guest, walks forth, without more train
Accompanied than with his own complete
Perfections; in himself was all his state,
More solemn than the tedious pomp that waits
On princes, when their rich retinue long
Of horses led and grooms besmeared with gold 356
Dazzles the crowd and sets them all agape.
Nearer his presence, Adam, though not awed,
Yet with submiss approach and reverence meek,
As to a superior nature, bowing low, 360
Thus said: "Native of heaven (for other place
None can than heaven such glorious shape contain),
Since, by descending from the thrones above,
Those happy places thou hast deigned a while
To want, and honor these, vouchsafe with us, 365
Two only, who yet by sovran gift possess
This spacious ground, in yonder shady bower
To rest, and what the Garden choicest bears
To sit and taste, till this meridian heat
Be over, and the sun more cool decline."
Whom thus the angelic Virtue answered mild: 371
"Adam, I therefore came; nor art thou such
Created, or such place hast here to dwell,

322. **store**, abundance. 340. **Pontus**, the region along the southeast shore of the Black Sea. **Punic coast**, the Carthaginian coast. **where Alcinöus reigned**, the mythical island of Phaeacia, which Odysseus visited in his wanderings. It was a veritable paradise. 342. **rined**. Milton used the substantive *rind* as a verb. We should say *rinded*. 345. **must**, unfermented wine. **meath**, mead, a fermented drink made with honey. Here Milton may be thinking merely of the juice of berries sweetened with honey and not fermented.

348. **Wants her**, lacks her. Note the inverted Latin construction. 349. **unfumed**, not burned to produce incense smoke. 350. **primitive**, first, primeval. 354. **the tedious pomp**. Cf. Pepys's account of the coronation ceremonies of Charles II on April 22-23, 1661 (pages II-367 ff.). Milton probably is alluding to these ceremonies. 359. **submiss**, submissive. 365. **want**, feel the absence of, lack, be without.

As may not oft invite, though Spirits of heaven,
To visit thee. Lead on, then, where thy bower 375
O'ershades; for these mid-hours, till evening rise,
I have at will." So to the silvan lodge
They came, that like Pomona's arbor smiled,
With flowerets decked and fragrant smells. But Eve,
Undecked, save with herself, more lovely fair 380
Than wood-nymph, or the fairest goddess feigned
Of three that in Mount Ida naked strove,
Stood to entertain her guest from heaven; no veil
She needed, virtue-proof; no thought infirm
Altered her cheek. On whom the Angel "Hail!" 385
Bestowed—the holy salutation used
Long after to blest Mary, second Eve:
"Hail! Mother of mankind, whose fruitful womb
Shall fill the world more numerous with thy sons
Than with these various fruits the trees of God 390
Have heaped this table!" Raised of grassy turf
Their table was, and mossy seats had round,
And on her ample square, from side to side,
All Autumn piled, though Spring and Autumn here
Danced hand-in-hand. A while discourse they hold— 395
No fear lest dinner cool—when thus began
Our Author: "Heavenly Stranger. please to taste
These bounties, which our Nourisher, from whom

378. **Pomona**, the goddess whom the Romans thought responsible for the fruit of trees. 382. **strove.** When at the marriage feast of Peleus and Thetis the goddess of discord threw among the gods a golden apple inscribed "To the fairest," Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite each claimed it. They took their difficulty to Paris, son of King Priam of Troy, for solution. When he decided in favor of Aphrodite, she repaid him by giving him Helen, the most beautiful of women, as his beloved. From this episode sprang the Trojan war. Cf. Tennyson's "Oenone" (page 522).

All perfect good, unmeasured-out, descends,
To us for food and for delight hath caused 400
The earth to yield; unsavory food, perhaps,
To spiritual natures; only this I know,
That one Celestial Father gives to all."
To whom the Angel: "Therefore, what he gives
(Whose praise be ever sung) to Man, in part 405
Spiritual, may of purest spirits be found
No ingrateful food. And food alike those pure
Intelligential substances require
As doth your rational; and both contain
Within them every lower faculty 410
Of sense, whereby they hear, see, smell, touch, taste,
Tasting concoct, digest, assimilate,
And corporeal to incorporeal turn.
For know, whatever was created needs
To be sustained and fed. Of elements
The grosser feeds the purer: earth the sea; 416
Earth and the sea feed air; the air those fires
Ethereal, and, as lowest, first the moon;
Whence in her visage round those spots, unpurged
Vapors not yet into her substance turned. 420
Nor doth the moon no nourishment exhale
From her moist continent to higher orbs.
The sun, that light imparts to all, receives
From all his alimental recompense
In humid exhalations, and at even 425
Sups with the ocean. Though in heaven the trees
Of life ambrosial fruitage bear, and vines
Yield nectar—though from off the boughs each morn
We brush mellifluous dews and find the ground
Covered with pearly grain—yet God hath here 430
Varied his bounty so with new delights

408. **Intelligential substances . . . rational**, substances of which the all-knowing angels are composed, and substances of which reasoning human beings are composed. 420. **Vapors.** See note on line 181, page 76. 430. **pearly grain**, probably manna (Exodus xvi).

As may compare with heaven; and to taste
Think not I shall be nice." So down they sat,
And to their viands fell; nor seemingly
The Angel, nor in mist—the common gloss 435
Of theologians—but with keen dispatch
Of real hunger, and concoctive heat
To transubstantiate; what redounds transpires
Through spirits with ease; nor wonder, if by fire
Of sooty coal the empiric alchemist 440
Can turn, or holds it possible to turn,
Metals of drossiest ore to perfect gold,
As from the mine. Meanwhile at table Eve
Ministered naked, and their flowing cups
With pleasant liquors crowned. O innocence 445
Deserving Paradise! If ever, then,
Then had the Sons of God excuse to have been
Enamored at that sight. But in those hearts
Love unlibidinous reigned, nor jealousy
Was understood, the injured lover's hell.
Thus when with meats and drinks they had sufficed, 451
Not burdened nature, sudden mind arose
In Adam not to let the occasion pass,
Given him by this great conference, to know
Of things above his world, and of their being 455
Who dwell in heaven, whose excellence he saw
Transcend his own so far, whose radiant forms,
Divine effulgence, whose high power so far
Exceeded human; and his wary speech
Thus to the empyreal minister he framed: 460
"Inhabitant with God, now know I well
Thy favor, in this honor done to Man;

433. **nice**, fastidious. 436. **with keen dispatch.** In the Old Testament certain passages say that the angels eat mortal food and others deny it. Cf. Genesis xviii, xix, and Tobit xii. 438. **what redounds**, etc. Raphael digested what his spiritual nature needed; the rest was refined away. 440. **empiric**, experimenting. 449. **unlibidinous**, not fleshly or sensual.

Under whose lowly roof thou hast vouchsafed
To enter, and these earthly fruits to taste,
Food not of angels, yet accepted so 465
As that more willingly thou couldst not seem
At heaven's high feasts to have fed; yet what compare!"
To whom the wingéd Hierarch replied:
"O Adam, one Almighty is, from whom
All things proceed, and up to him return, 470
If not depraved from good, created all
Such to perfection; one first matter all,
Endued with various forms, various degrees
Of substance, and, in things that live, of life;
But more refined, more spiritous and pure, 475
As nearer to him placed or nearer tending
Each in their several active spheres assigned,
Till body up to spirit work, in bounds
Proportioned to each kind. So from the root
Springs lighter the green stalk, from thence the leaves 480
More aëry, last the bright consummate flower
Spirits odorous breathes. Flowers and their fruit,
Man's nourishment, by gradual scale sublimed,
To vital spirits aspire, to animal,
To intellectual; give both life and sense, 485
Fancy and understanding; whence the soul
Reason receives, and reason is her being,
Discursive, or intuitive. Discourse
Is oftest yours; the latter most is ours,
Differing but in degree, of kind the same. 490

467. **compare**, comparison. 468. **Hierarch**, sacred ruler: here, one of those ruling in heaven. 476. **nearer tending**, etc. The idea is that God, who is pure spirit, drew to him the inferior combinations of spirit and matter; and that as they perceived him and aspired to be united with him they purged away gradually the dross of matter and became more nearly like him in spirit. Cf. Browning's "Rabbi Ben Ezra" (page 558). 488. **Discursive, or intuitive**, reasoning either by elaborate processes or by direct perception.

Wonder not, then, what God for you saw good
If I refuse not, but convert, as you,
To proper substance. Time may come when men
With angels may participate, and find
No inconvenient diet, nor too light fare; 495
And from these corporal nutriments, perhaps,
Your bodies may at last turn all to spirit,
Improved by tract of time, and wing'd ascend
Ethereal, as we, or may at choice
Here or in heavenly paradises dwell, 500
If ye be found obedient, and retain
Unalterably firm his love entire
Whose progeny you are. Meanwhile enjoy
Your fill, what happiness this happy state
Can comprehend, incapable of more."
To whom the Patriarch of Mankind replied: 506
"O favorable Spirit, propitious guest,
Well hast thou taught the way that might direct
Our knowledge, and the scale of Nature set
From center to circumference, whereon,
In contemplation of created things, 511
By steps we may ascend to God. But say,
What meant that caution joined, *If ye be found*
Obedient? Can we want obedience, then,
To him, or possibly his love desert, 515
Who formed us from the dust, and placed us here
Full to the utmost measure of what bliss
Human desires can seek or apprehend?"
To whom the Angel: "Son of heaven and earth,
Attend! That thou art happy, owe to God; 520
That thou continuest such, owe to thyself,
That is, to thy obedience; therein stand.
This was that caution given thee; be advised.
God made thee perfect, not immutable;
And good he made thee; but to persevere 525
He left it in thy power—ordained thy will
By nature free, not overruled by fate
Inextricable, or strict necessity.
Our voluntary service he requires,
Not our necessitated. Such with him 530
Finds no acceptance, nor can find; for how
Can hearts not free be tried whether they serve
Willing or no, who will but what they must
By destiny, and can no other choose?
Myself, and all the Angelic Host, that stand 535
In sight of God enthroned, our happy state
Hold, as you yours, while our obedience holds.
On other surety none; freely we serve,
Because we freely love, as in our will
To love or not; in this we stand or fall. 540
And some are fallen, to disobedience fallen,
And so from heaven to deepest hell. O fall
From what high state of bliss into what woe!"
To whom our great Progenitor: "Thy words
Attentive, and with more delighted ear, 545
Divine instructor, I have heard, than when
Cherubic songs by night from neighboring hills
Aërial music send. Nor knew I not
To be, both will and deed, created free.
Yet that we never shall forget to love 550
Our Maker, and obey him whose command
Single is yet so just, my constant thoughts
Assured me, and still assure; though what thou tell'st
Hath passed in heaven some doubt within me move,
But more desire to hear, if thou consent,
The full relation, which must needs be strange, 556

522. **thy obedience.** See note on line 236. Compare with Hrothgar's reflections on life in *Beowulf*, page 33, lines 87 ff.

Worthy of sacred silence to be heard.
And we have yet large day, for scarce the sun
Hath finished half his journey, and scarce begins
His other half in the great zone of heaven." 560
Thus Adam made request; and Raphael,
After short pause assenting, thus began:
"High matter thou enjoin'st me, O prime of Men—
Sad task and hard; for how shall I relate
To human sense the invisible exploits 565
Of warring Spirits? how, without remorse,
The ruin of so many, glorious once
And perfect while they stood? how, last, unfold
The secrets of another world, perhaps
Not lawful to reveal? Yet for thy good
This is dispensed; and what surmounts the reach 571
Of human sense I shall delineate so,
By likening spiritual to corporal forms,
As may express them best—though what if earth
Be but the shadow of heaven, and things therein 575
Each to other like more than on earth is thought!
"As yet this world was not, and chaos wild
Reigned where these heavens now roll, where earth now rests
Upon her center poised, when on a day
(For time, though in eternity, applied
To motion, measures all thing durable
By present, past, and future), on such day 582
As heaven's great year brings forth, the empyreal host
Of angels, by imperial summons called,
Innumerable before the Almighty's throne 585
Forthwith from all the ends of heaven appeared
Under their hierarchs in orders bright.
Ten thousand thousand ensigns high advanced,
Standards and gonfalons, 'twixt van and rear
Stream in the air, and for distinction serve 590
Of hierarchies, of orders, and degrees;
Or in their glittering tissues bear emblazed
Holy memorials, acts of zeal and love
Recorded eminent. Thus when in orbs
Of circuit inexpressible they stood, 595
Orb within orb, the Father Infinite,
By whom in bliss embosomed sat the Son,
Amidst, as from a flaming mount, whose top
Brightness had made invisible, thus spake:
"'Hear, all ye Angels, Progeny of Light, 600
Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers,
Hear my decree, which unrevoked shall stand!
This day I have begot whom I declare
My only Son, and on this holy hill
Him have anointed, whom ye now behold 605
At my right hand. Your head I him appoint,
And by myself have sworn to him shall bow
All knees in heaven, and shall confess him Lord.
Under his great vicegerent reign abide,
United as one individual soul, 610
Forever happy. Him who disobeys
Me disobeys, breaks union, and, that day,
Cast out from God and blessed vision, falls
Into utter darkness, deep engulfed, his place
Ordained without redemption, without end.' 615
"So spake the Omnipotent. And with his words
All seemed well pleased; all seemed, but were not all.
That day, as other solemn days, they spent
In song and dance about the sacred hill,
Mystical dance, which yonder starry sphere 620

589. **gonfalon**, an Italian word applied to the banners of certain medieval Italian cities or republics. Frequently the *gonfalonier*, or flag-bearer, was the chief magistrate of the city or republic.

601. **Thrones**, etc. See note on line 176, page 76.
609. **vicegerent**, delegated.

Of planets and of fixed in all her wheels
Resembles nearest; mazes intricate,
Eccentric, intervolved, yet regular
Then most when most irregular they seem;
And in their motions harmony divine 625
So smooths her charming tones that God's own ear
Listens delighted. Evening, now approached
(For we have also our evening and our morn—
We ours for change delectable, not need),
Forthwith from dance to sweet repast they turn 630
Desirous. All in circles as they stood,
Tables are set, and on a sudden piled
With angels' food; and rubied nectar flows
In pearl, in diamond, and massy gold,
Fruit of delicious vines, the growth of heaven. 635
On flowers reposed, and with fresh flowerets crowned,
They eat, they drink, and in communion sweet
Quaff immortality and joy, secure
Of surfeit where full measure only bounds
Excess, before the all-bounteous King, who showered 640
With copious hand, rejoicing in their joy.
Now when ambrosial night, with clouds exhaled
From that high mount of God whence light and shade
Spring both, the face of brightest heaven had changed
To grateful twilight (for night comes not there 645
In darker veil) and roseate dews disposed
All but the unsleeping eyes of God to rest,
Wide over all the plain, and wider far
Than all this globous earth in plain outspread
(Such are the courts of God) the angelic throng, 650
Dispersed in bands and files, their camp extend
By living streams among the trees of life—
Pavilions numberless and sudden reared,
Celestial tabernacles, where they slept,
Fanned with cool winds; save those who, in their course, 655
Melodious hymns about the sovran throne
Alternate all night long. But not so waked
Satan—so call him now; his former name
Is heard no more in heaven. He, of the first,
If not the first Archangel, great in power, 660
In favor, and preëminence, yet fraught
With envy against the Son of God, that day
Honored by his great Father, and proclaimed
Messiah, King Anointed, could not bear,
Through pride, that sight, and thought himself impaired. 665
Deep malice thence conceiving and disdain,
Soon as midnight brought on the dusky hour
Friendliest to sleep and silence, he resolved
With all his legions to dislodge, and leave
Unworshiped, unobeyed, the Throne supreme, 670
Contemptuous, and, his next subordinate
Awakening, thus to him in secret spake:
"'Sleep'st thou, companion dear? what sleep can close
Thy eyelids? and rememberest what decree,
Of yesterday, so late hath passed the lips
Of heaven's Almighty? Thou to me thy thoughts 676
Wast wont, I mine to thee was wont, to impart;
Both waking we were one; how, then, can now
Thy sleep dissent? New laws thou seest imposed;
New laws from him who reigns new minds may raise 680
In us who serve—new counsels, to debate

621. **fixed**, i. e., fixed stars. 639. **surfeit**, indigestion due to overeating. 646. **roseate**, a word usually applied to the rosy color of dawn. The rose color may here be meant, or else the moist quality of dew as implied in the Latin word for dewy dampness, *ros*.

658. **his former name**, Lucifer (the light-bearer, or morning star).

What doubtful may ensue. More in this place
To utter is not safe. Assemble thou
Of all those myriads which we lead the chief;
Tell them that, by command, ere yet dim night 685
Her shadowy cloud withdraws, I am to haste,
And all who under me their banners wave,
Homeward with flying march where we possess
The quarters of the North, there to prepare
Fit entertainment to receive our King,
The great Messiah, and his new commands, 691
Who speedily through all the Hierarchies
Intends to pass triumphant, and give laws.'
"So spake the false Archangel, and infused
Bad influence into the unwary breast 695
Of his associate. He together calls,
Or several one by one, the regent Powers,
Under him regent; tells, as he was taught,
That, the Most High commanding, now ere night,
Now ere dim night had disencumbered heaven, 700
The great hierarchal standard was to move;
Tells the suggested cause, and casts between
Ambiguous words and jealousies, to sound
Or taint integrity. But all obeyed
The wonted signal and superior voice
Of their great Potentate; for great indeed 706
His name, and high was his degree in heaven:
His countenance, as the morning-star that guides
The starry flock, allured them, and with lies
Drew after him the third part of heaven's host. 710
Meanwhile, the Eternal Eye, whose sight discerns
Abstrusest thoughts, from forth his holy mount,
And from within the golden lamps that burn
Nightly before him, saw without their light
Rebellion rising—saw in whom, how spread 715
Among the Sons of Morn, what multitudes
Were banded to oppose his high decree;
And, smiling, to his only Son thus said:
"'Son, thou in whom my glory I behold
In full resplendence, Heir of all my might, 720
Nearly it now concerns us to be sure
Of our omnipotence, and with what arms
We mean to hold what anciently we claim
Of deity or empire. Such a foe
Is rising, who intends to erect his throne 725
Equal to ours, throughout the spacious North;
Nor so content, hath in his thought to try
In battle what our power is or our right.
Let us advise, and to this hazard draw
With speed what force is left, and all employ 730
In our defense, lest unawares we lose
This our high place, our sanctuary, our hill.'
"To whom the Son, with calm aspéct and clear
Lightening divine, ineffable, serene,
Made answer: 'Mighty Father, thou thy foes 735
Justly hast in derision, and secure
Laugh'st at their vain designs and tumults vain—
Matter to me of glory, whom their hate
Illustrates, when they see all regal power
Given me to quell their pride, and in event 740
Know whether I be dextrous to subdue
Thy rebels, or be found the worst in heaven.'
"So spake the Son; but Satan with his Powers
Far was advanced on wingéd speed, an host

689. **the North**, where some ancient and medieval theologians located hell.

Innumerable as the stars of night, 745
Or stars of morning, dewdrops which the sun
Impearls on every leaf and every flower.
Regions they passed, the mighty regencies
Of Seraphim and Potentates and Thrones
In their triple degrees—regions to which
All thy dominion, Adam, is no more 751
Than what this Garden is to all the earth
And all the sea, from one entire globose
Stretched into longitude; which having passed,
At length into the limits of the North 755
They came, and Satan to his royal seat
High on a hill, far-blazing, as a mount
Raised on a mount, with pyramids and towers
From diamond quarries hewn and rocks of gold—
The palace of great Lucifer (so call 760
That structure, in the dialect of men
Interpreted) which, not long after, he,
Affecting all equality with God,
In imitation of that mount whereon
Messiah was declared in sight of heaven, 765
The Mountain of the Congregation called;
For thither he assembled all his train,
Pretending so commanded to consult
About the great reception of their King,
Thither to come, and with calumnious art 770
Of counterfeited truth thus held their ears:
"'Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers—
If these magnific titles yet remain
Not merely titular, since by decree
Another now hath to himself engrossed
All power, and us eclipsed under the name 776
Of King Anointed; for whom all this haste
Of midnight march, and hurried meeting here,

749. **Seraphim.** See note on line 176, page 76. 753. **globose**, globe. Here the adjective is used for the noun. 766. **Mountain of the Congregation.** Isaiah's name (Isaiah xiv, 13) for the gathering place of Lucifer's hosts. 773. **magnific**, magnificent, but meaning here "making great." 774. **titular**, empty, with no prerogatives or real significance. 775. **engrossed**, taken possession of, absorbed.

This only to consult, how we may best,
With what may be devised of honors new, 780
Receive him coming to receive from us
Knee-tribute yet unpaid, prostration vile!
Too much to one! but double how endured—
To one and to his image now proclaimed?
But what if better counsels might erect 785
Our minds, and teach us to cast off this yoke!
Will ye submit your necks, and choose to bend
The supple knee? Ye will not, if I trust
To know ye right, or if ye know yourselves
Natives and Sons of Heaven possessed before 790
By none, and, if not equal all, yet free,
Equally free; for orders and degrees
Jar not with liberty, but well consist.
Who can in reason, then, or right, assume
Monarchy over such as live by right 795
His equals—if in power and splendor less,
In freedom equal? or can introduce
Law and edict on us, who without law
Err not? much less for this to be our Lord,
And look for adoration, to the abuse 800
Of those imperial titles which assert
Our being ordained to govern, not to serve!'
"Thus far his bold discourse without control
Had audience, when, among the Seraphim,
Abdiel, than whom none with more zeal adored 805
The Deity, and divine commands obeyed,
Stood up, and in a flame of zeal severe
The current of his fury thus opposed:
"'O argument blasphemous, false, and proud—
Words which no ear ever to hear in heaven 810
Expected; least of all from thee, ingrate,

793. **well consist**, stand with it well, harmonize. 805. **Abdiel**, meaning servant of God.

In place thyself so high above thy peers!
Canst thou with impious obloquy condemn
The just decree of God, pronounced and sworn,
That to his only Son, by right endued 815
With regal scepter, every soul in heaven
Shall bend the knee, and in that honor due
Confess him rightful King? Unjust, thou say'st,
Flatly unjust, to bind with laws the free,
And equal over equals to let reign, 820
One over all with unsucceeded power!
Shalt thou give law to God? shalt thou dispute
With him the points of liberty, who made
Thee what thou art, and formed the Powers of Heaven
Such as he pleased, and circumscribed their being? 825
Yet, by experience taught, we know how good,
And of our good and of our dignity
How provident, he is—how far from thought
To make us less; bent rather to exalt
Our happy state, under one head more near 830
United. But—to grant it thee unjust
That equal over equals monarch reign—
Thyself, though great and glorious, dost thou count,
Or all angelic nature joined in one,
Equal to him, begotten Son, by whom,
As by his Word, the mighty Father made 836
All things, even thee, and all the Spirits of heaven
By him created in their bright degrees,
Crowned them with glory, and to their glory named
Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers?— 840
Essential Powers; nor by his reign obscured,
But more illustrious made; since he, the head,
One of our number thus reduced becomes;
His laws our laws; all honor to him done
Returns our own. Cease, then, this impious rage, 845
And tempt not these; but hasten to appease
The incenséd Father and the incenséd Son
While pardon may be found, in time besought.'
"So spake the fervent Angel; but his zeal
None seconded, as out of season judged,
Or singular and rash. Whereat rejoiced
The Apostate, and, more haughty, thus replied: 852
"'That we were formed, then, say'st thou? and the work
Of secondary hands, by task transferred
From Father to his Son? Strange point and new! 855
Doctrine which we would know whence learned! Who saw
When this creation was? Remember'st thou
Thy making, while the Maker gave thee being?
We know no time when we were not as now;
Know none before us, self-begot, self-raised 860
By our own quickening power when fatal course
Had circled his full orb, the birth mature
Of this our native heaven, Ethereal Sons.
Our puissance is our own; our own right hand
Shall teach us highest deeds, by proof to try 865
Who is our equal. Then thou shalt behold
Whether by supplication we intend
Address, and to begirt the Almighty Throne
Beseeching or besieging. This report,
These tidings, carry to the Anointed King; 870
And fly, ere evil intercept thy flight.'
"He said; and, as the sound of waters deep,
Hoarse murmur echoed to his words applause
Through the infinite host. Nor less for that

813. **obloquy**, censorious or criticizing speech.

852. **Apostate**, the renegade.

The flaming Seraph, fearless, though alone, 875
Encompassed round with foes, thus answered bold:
"'O alienate from God, O spirit accursed,
Forsaken of all good! I see thy fall
Determined, and thy hapless crew involved
In this perfidious fraud, contagion spread 880
Both of thy crime and punishment. Henceforth
No more be troubled how to quit the yoke
Of God's Messiah. Those indulgent laws
Will not be now vouchsafed; other decrees
Against thee are gone forth without recall; 885
That golden scepter which thou didst reject
Is now an iron rod to bruise and break
Thy disobedience. Well thou didst advise.
Yet not for thy advice or threats I fly
These wicked tents devoted, lest the wrath 890
Impendent, raging into sudden flame,
Distinguish not; for soon expect to feel
His thunder on thy head, devouring fire.
Then who created thee lamenting learn
When who can uncreate thee thou shalt know.' 895
"So spake the Seraph Abdiel, faithful found;
Among the faithless faithful only he;
Among innumerable false unmoved,
Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,
His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal; 900
Nor number nor example with him wrought
To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind,
Though single. From amidst them forth he passed,
Long way through hostile scorn which he sustained
Superior, nor of violence feared aught;
And with retorted scorn his back he turned 906
On those proud towers, to swift destruction doomed."

890. **devoted**, doomed. 906. **retorted**, cast back again.

BOOK VI

THE ARGUMENT

Raphael continues to relate how Michael and Gabriel were sent forth to battle against Satan and his Angels. The first fight described: Satan and his Powers retire under night. He calls a council; invents devilish engines, which, in the second day's fight, put Michael and his Angels to some disorder; but they at length, pulling up mountains, overwhelmed both the force and machines of Satan. Yet, the tumult not so ending, God, on the third day, sends Messiah his Son, for whom he had reserved the glory of that victory. He, in the power of his Father, coming to the place, and causing all his legions to stand still on either side, with his chariot and thunder driving into the midst of his enemies, pursues them, unable to resist, toward the wall of heaven; which opening, they leap down with horror and confusion into the place of punishment prepared for them in the deep. Messiah returns with triumph to his Father.

"All night the dreadless Angel, unpursued,
Through heaven's wide champaign held his way, till Morn,
Waked by the circling Hours, with rosy hand
Unbarred the gates of light. There is a cave
Within the Mount of God, fast by his throne, 5
Where Light and Darkness in perpetual round
Lodge and dislodge by turns—which makes through heaven
Grateful vicissitude, like day and night;
Light issues forth, and at the other door
Obsequious Darkness enters, till her hour 10
To veil the heaven, though darkness there might well
Seem twilight here. And now went forth the Morn
Such as in highest heaven, arrayed in gold
Empyreal; from before her vanished Night,
Shot through with orient beams; when all the plain 15
Covered with thick embattled squadrons bright,
Chariots, and flaming arms, and fiery steeds,

2. **champaign**, country. 8. **vicissitude**, change.

Reflecting blaze on blaze, first met his view.
War he perceived, war in procinct, and found
Already known what he for news had thought 20
To have reported. Gladly then he mixed
Among those friendly Powers, who him received
With joy and acclamations loud, that one,
That of so many myriads fallen yet one,
Returned not lost. On to the sacred hill 25
They led him, high applauded, and present
Before the seat supreme; from whence a voice,
From midst a golden cloud, thus mild was heard:
"'Servant of God, well done! Well hast thou fought
The better fight, who single hast maintained 30
Against revolted multitudes the cause
Of truth, in word mightier than they in arms,
And for the testimony of truth hast borne
Universal reproach, far worse to bear
Than violence; for this was all thy care— 35
To stand approved in sight of God, though worlds
Judged thee perverse. The easier conquest now
Remains thee—aided by this host of friends,
Back on thy foes more glorious to return
Than scorned thou didst depart; and to subdue 40
By force who reason for their law refuse—
Right reason for their law, and for their King
Messiah, who by right of merit reigns.
Go, Michael, of celestial armies prince,
And thou, in military prowess next, 45
Gabriel; lead forth to battle these my sons
Invincible; lead forth my arméd Saints,
By thousands and by millions ranged for fight,
Equal in number to that godless crew
Rebellious. Them with fire and hostile arms 50
Fearless assault; and, to the brow of heaven
Pursuing, drive them out from God and bliss
Into their place of punishment, the gulf
Of Tartarus, which ready opens wide
His fiery chaos to receive their fall.' 55
"So spake the Sovran Voice; and clouds began
To darken all the hill, and smoke to roll
In dusky wreaths reluctant flames, the sign
Of wrath awaked; nor with less dread the loud,
Ethereal trumpet from on high gan blow. 60
At which command the Powers Militant
That stood for heaven, in mighty quadrate joined
Of union irresistible, moved on
In silence their bright legions to the sound
Of instrumental harmony, that breathed
Heroic ardor to adventurous deeds 66
Under their godlike leaders, in the cause
Of God and his Messiah. On they move,
Indissolubly firm; nor obvious hill,
Nor straitening vale, nor wood, nor stream, divides 70
Their perfect ranks; for high above the ground
Their march was, and the passive air upbore
Their nimble tread. As when the total kind
Of birds, in orderly array on wind,
Came summoned over Eden to receive 75
Their names of thee; so over many a tract
Of heaven they marched, and many a province wide,
Tenfold the length of this terrene. At last,
Far in the horizon, to the north, appeared
From skirt to skirt a fiery region, stretched 80

19. **in procinct**, in preparation; Roman soldiers when standing equipped for battle were spoken of as *in procinctu*.

54. **Tartarus**, the lowest quarter of the Greek Hades. 58. **reluctant**, struggling. 62. **quadrate**, square. 78. **terrene**, land, earth.

In battailous aspect; and, nearer view,
Bristled with upright beams innumerable
Of rigid spears, and helmets thronged, and shields
Various, with boastful argument portrayed,
The banded Powers of Satan hasting on
With furious expedition; for they weened 86
That selfsame day, by fight or by surprise,
To win the Mount of God, and on his throne
To set the envier of his state, the proud
Aspirer. But their thoughts proved fond and vain 90
In the mid-way; though strange to us it seemed
At first that angel should with angel war,
And in fierce hosting meet, who wont to meet
So oft in festivals of joy and love
Unanimous, as sons of one great Sire,
Hymning the Eternal Father. But the shout 96
Of battle now began, and rushing sound
Of onset ended soon each milder thought.
High in the midst, exalted as a god,
The Apostate in his sun-bright chariot sat, 100
Idol of majesty divine, inclosed
With flaming Cherubim and golden shields;
Then lighted from his gorgeous throne —for now
'Twixt host and host but narrow space was left,
A dreadful interval, and front to front
Presented stood, in terrible array 106
Of hideous length. Before the cloudy van,
On the rough edge of battle ere it joined,
Satan, with vast and haughty strides advanced,
Came towering, armed in adamant and gold. 110
Abdiel that sight endured not, where he stood
Among the mightiest, bent on highest deeds,
And thus his own undaunted heart explores:
"'O Heaven! that such resemblance of the Highest
Should yet remain, where faith and realty 115
Remain not! Wherefore should not strength and might
There fail where virtue fails, or weakest prove
Where boldest, though to sight unconquerable?
His puissance, trusting in the Almighty's aid,
I mean to try, whose reason I have tried 120
Unsound and false; nor is it aught but just
That he who in debate of truth hath won
Should win in arms, in both disputes alike
Victor. Though brutish that contést and foul,
When reason hath to deal with force, yet so 125
Most reason is that reason overcome.'
"So pondering, and from his arméd peers
Forth-stepping opposite, halfway he met
His daring foe, at this prevention more
Incensed, and thus securely him defied:
"'Proud, art thou met? Thy hope was to have reached 131
The height of thy aspiring unopposed—
The throne of God unguarded, and his side
Abandoned at the terror of thy power
Or potent tongue. Fool! not to think how vain 135
Against the Omnipotent to rise in arms;
Who, out of smallest things, could without end
Have raised incessant armies to defeat
Thy folly; or with solitary hand,
Reaching beyond all limit, at one blow,
Unaided could have finished thee, and whelmed 141
Thy legions under darkness! But thou seest

90. **fond**, weak, foolish. 93. **hosting**, assembly of armed men. 110. **adamant**, a fictitious stone or metal of great hardness.

115. **realty**, royalty or loyalty

All are not of thy train; there be who faith
Prefer, and piety to God, though then
To thee not visible when I alone 145
Seemed in thy world erroneous to dissent
From all. My sect thou seest; now learn too late
How few sometimes may know when thousands err.'
"Whom the grand Foe, with scornful eye askance,
Thus answered: 'Ill for thee, but in wished hour 150
Of my revenge, first sought for, thou return'st
From flight, seditious Angel, to receive
Thy merited reward, the first assay
Of this right hand provoked, since first that tongue,
Inspired with contradiction, durst oppose 155
A third part of the gods, in synod met
Their deities to assert; who, while they feel
Vigor divine within them, can allow
Omnipotence to none. But well thou com'st
Before thy fellows, ambitious to win 160
From me some plume, that thy success may show
Destruction to the rest. This pause between
(Unanswered lest thou boast) to let thee know.—
At first I thought that liberty and heaven
To heavenly souls had been all one; but now 165
I see that most through sloth had rather serve,
Ministering spirits, trained up in feast and song.
Such hast thou armed, the minstrelsy of heaven—
Servility with freedom to contend,
As both their deeds compared this day shall prove.' 170
"To whom, in brief, thus Abdiel stern replied:
'Apostate! still thou err'st, nor end wilt find
Of erring, from the path of truth remote.

147. **My sect**, my followers, who think as I do. 156. **synod**, church council.

Unjustly thou deprav'st it with the name
Of servitude, to serve whom God ordains, 175
Or Nature. God and Nature bid the same,
When he who rules is worthiest, and excels
Them whom he governs. This is servitude—
To serve the unwise, or him who hath rebelled
Against his worthier, as thine now serve thee, 180
Thyself not free, but to thyself enthralled;
Yet lewdly dar'st our ministering upbraid.
Reign thou in hell, thy kingdom; let me serve
In heaven God ever blest, and his divine
Behests obey, worthiest to be obeyed.
Yet chains in hell, not realms, expect. Meanwhile, 186
From me returned, as erst thou saidst, from flight,
This greeting on thy impious crest receive.'
"So saying, a noble stroke he lifted high,
Which hung not, but so swift with tempest fell 190
On the proud crest of Satan that no sight,
Nor motion of swift thought, less could his shield,
Such ruin intercept. Ten paces huge
He back recoiled; the tenth on bended knee
His massy spear upstayed; as if, on earth, 195
Winds under ground, or waters forcing way,
Sidelong had pushed a mountain from his seat,
Half-sunk with all his pines. Amazement seized
The rebel Thrones, but greater rage, to see
Thus foiled their mightiest. Ours joy filled, and shout, 200
Presage of victory, and fierce desire
Of battle; whereat Michael bid sound

182. **lewdly**, ignorantly, basely.

The Archangel trumpet. Through the vast of heaven
It sounded, and the faithful armies rung
Hosanna to the Highest; nor stood at gaze 205
The adverse legions, nor less hideous joined
The horrid shock. Now storming fury rose,
And clamor such as heard in heaven till now
Was never; arms on armor clashing brayed
Horrible discord, and the madding wheels 210
Of brazen chariots raged; dire was the noise
Of conflict; overhead the dismal hiss
Of fiery darts in flaming volleys flew,
And, flying, vaulted either host with fire.
So under fiery cope together rushed 215
Both battles main with ruinous assault
And inextinguishable rage. All heaven
Resounded; and had earth been then, all earth
Had to her center shook. What wonder, when
Millions of fierce encountering Angels fought 220
On either side, the least of whom could wield
These elements, and arm him with the force
Of all their regions? How much more of power
Army against army numberless to raise
Dreadful combustion warring, and disturb, 225
Though not destroy, their happy native seat;
Had not the Eternal King Omnipotent
From his strong hold of heaven high overruled
And limited their might, though numbered such
As each divided legion might have seemed 230
A numerous host, in strength each armed hand
A legion! Led in fight, yet leader seemed

215. **cope**, an ecclesiastical rounded cape; hence used of a vault of masonry or of heaven itself. 216. **battles**, armies.

Each warrior single as in chief; expert
When to advance, or stand, or turn the sway
Of battle, open when, and when to close 235
The ridges of grim war. No thought of flight,
None of retreat, no unbecoming deed
That argued fear; each on himself relied
As only in his arm the moment lay
Of victory. Deeds of eternal fame 240
Were done, but infinite; for wide was spread
That war, and various: sometimes on firm ground
A standing fight; then, soaring on main wing,
Tormented all the air; all air seemed then
Conflicting fire. Long time in even scale 245
The battle hung; till Satan, who that day
Prodigious power had shown, and met in arms
No equal, ranging through the dire attack
Of fighting Seraphim confused, at length
Saw where the sword of Michael smote, and felled 250
Squadrons at once; with huge two-handed sway
Branished aloft, the horrid edge came down
Wide-wasting. Such destruction to withstand
He hasted, and opposed the rocky orb
Of tenfold adamant, his ample shield, 255
A vast circumference. At his approach
The great Archangel from his warlike toil
Surceased, and, glad, as hoping here to end
Intestine war in heaven, the Arch-foe subdued,
Or captive dragged in chains, with hostile frown 260
And visage all inflamed, first thus began:
" 'Author of evil, unknown till thy revolt,

233. **in chief**. Each angel fought as if he were the leader, or, to give *in chief* its original feudal meaning, each angel fought as if he had been given his authority directly from God. 258. **Surceased**, stopped. 259. **Intestine**, civil.

Unnamed in heaven, now plenteous as thou seest
These acts of hateful strife—hateful to all,
Though heaviest, by just measure, on thyself 265
And thy adherents—how hast thou disturbed
Heaven's blessed peace, and into Nature brought
Misery, uncreated till the crime
Of thy rebellion! how hast thou instilled
Thy malice into thousands, once upright 270
And faithful, now proved false! But think not here
To trouble holy rest; heaven casts thee out
From all her confines; heaven, the seat of bliss,
Brooks not the works of violence and war.
Hence, then, and evil go with thee along, 275
Thy offspring, to the place of evil, hell,
Thou and thy wicked crew! there mingle broils!
Ere this avenging sword begin thy doom,
Or some more sudden vengeance, winged from God,
Precipitate thee with augmented pain.'
"So spake the Prince of Angels; to whom thus 281
The Adversary: 'Nor think thou with wind
Of airy threats to awe whom yet with deeds
Thou canst not. Hast thou turned the least of these
To flight—or, if to fall, but that they rise 285
Unvanquished—easier to transact with me
That thou shouldst hope, imperious, and with threats
To chase me hence? Err not that so shall end
The strife which thou call'st evil, but we style
The strife of glory; which we mean to win, 290
Or turn this heaven itself into the hell
Thou fablest; here, however, to dwell free,
If not to reign. Meanwhile, thy utmost force—
And join him named Almighty to thy aid—
I fly not, but have sought thee far and nigh.' 295
"They ended parle, and both addressed for fight
Unspeakable; for who, though with the tongue
Of angels, can relate, or to what things
Liken on earth conspicuous, that may lift
Human imagination to such height 300
Of godlike power? for likest gods they seemed,
Stood they or moved, in stature, motion, arms,
Fit to decide the empire of great heaven.
Now waved their fiery swords, and in the air
Made horrid circles; two broad suns their shields 305
Blazed opposite, while expectation stood
In horror; from each hand with speed retired,
Where erst was thickest fight, the angelic throng,
And left large field, unsafe within the wind
Of such commotion; such as (to set forth 310
Great things by small) if, Nature's concord broke,
Among the constellations war were sprung,
Two planets, rushing from aspéct malign
Of fiercest opposition, in mid sky
Should combat, and their jarring spheres confound. 315
Together both, with next to almighty arm
Uplifted imminent, one stroke they aimed
That might determine, and not need repeat
As not of power, at once; nor odds appeared
In might or swift prevention. But the sword 320
Of Michael from the armory of God
Was given him tempered so that neither keen

296. parle. speaking. addressed, prepared.

Nor solid might resist that edge. It met
The sword of Satan, with steep force to smite
Descending, and in half cut sheer; nor stayed, 325
But, with swift wheel reverse, deep entering, shared
All his right side. Then Satan first knew pain,
And writhed him to and fro convolved; so sore
The griding sword with discontinuous wound
Passed through him. But the ethereal substance closed, 330
Not long divisible; and from the gash
A stream of nectarous humor issuing flowed
Sanguine, such as celestial Spirits may bleed,
And all his armor stained, erewhile so bright,
Forthwith, on all sides, to his aid was run 335
By Angels many and strong, who interposed
Defense, while others bore him on their shields
Back to his chariot where it stood retired
From off the files of war. There they him laid
Gnashing for anguish, and despite, and shame 340
To find himself not matchless, and his pride
Humbled by such rebuke, so far beneath
His confidence to equal God in power.
Yet soon he healed; for Spirits, that live throughout
Vital in every part—not, as frail Man, 345
In entrails, heart or head, liver or reins—
Cannot but by annihilating die;
Nor in their liquid texture mortal wound
Receive, no more than can the fluid air.
All heart they live, all head, all eye, all ear, 350
All intellect, all sense; and as they please
They limb themselves, and color, shape, or size
Assume, as likes them best, condense or rare.
"Meanwhile, in other parts, like deeds deserved
Memorial, where the might of Gabriel fought, 355
And with fierce ensigns pierced the deep array
Of Moloch, furious king, who him defied,
And at his chariot-wheels to drag him bound
Threatened, nor from the Holy One of heaven
Refrained his tongue blasphémous, but anon, 360
Down cloven to the waist, with shattered arms
And uncouth pain fled bellowing. On each wing
Uriel and Raphael his vaunting foe,
Though huge and in a rock of diamond armed,
Vanquished—Adramelech and Asmadai,
Two potent Thrones, that to be less than gods 366
Disdained, but meaner thoughts learned in their flight,
Mangled with ghastly wounds through plate and mail.
Nor stood unmindful Abdiel to annoy
The atheist crew, but with redoubled blow 370
Ariel, and Arioch, and the violence
Of Ramiel, scorched and blasted, overthrew.
I might relate of thousands, and their names
Eternize here on earth; but those elect
Angels, contented with their fame in heaven, 375
Seek not the praise of men. The other sort,
In might though wondrous and in acts of war,
Nor of renown less eager, yet by doom
Canceled from heaven and sacred memory,

329. **griding**, cutting. **discontinuous**, because it separated the tissues. 346. **reins**, intestines.

357. **Moloch**, the fire-god of the Phoenicians, to whom little children were sacrificed by being cast into the flames. All of the heathen gods are pictured by Milton as having been originally revolted angels. 364. **rock of diamond armed**, in armor hewn from a gigantic diamond, which is the hardest form of carbon. 365. **Adramelech**, a Babylonian fire-god worshiped like Moloch. **Asmadai**, the destructive demonic spirit described in the book of Tobit. See note on line 222, page 77. 371-372. **Ariel, Arioch, Ramiel**, heavenly spirits whom Milton invented.

Nameless in dark oblivion let them dwell 380
For strength from truth divided, and from just,
Illaudable, naught merits but dispraise
And ignominy, yet to glory aspires,
Vainglorious, and through infamy seeks fame.
Therefore eternal silence be their doom!
"And now, their mightiest quelled, the battle swerved, 386
With many an inroad gored; deformed rout
Entered, and foul disorder; all the ground
With shivered armor strown, and on a heap
Chariot and charioteer lay overturned,
And fiery, foaming steeds; what stood recoiled, 391
O'er-wearied, through the faint Satanic host,
Defensive scarce, or with pale fear surprised—
Then first with fear surprised and sense of pain—
Fled ignominious, to such evil brought
By sin of disobedience, till that hour 396
Not liable to fear, or flight, or pain.
Far otherwise the inviolable Saints
In cubic phalanx firm advanced entire,
Invulnerable, impenetrably armed; 400
Such high advantages their innocence
Gave them above their foes—not to have sinned,
Not to have disobeyed; in fight they stood
Unwearied, unobnoxious to be pained
By wound, though from their place by violence moved. 405
"Now Night her course began, and, over heaven
Inducing darkness, grateful truce imposed,
And silence on the odious din of war.
Under her cloudy covert both retired,
Victor and vanquished. On the foughten field 410
Michael and his Angels, prevalent
Encamping, placed in guard their watches round,
Cherubic waving fires. On the other part,

404. **unobnoxious**, not liable to injury. 411. **prevalent**, victorious.

Satan with his rebellious disappeared,
Far in the dark dislodged, and, void of rest, 415
His potentates to council called by night,
And in the midst thus undismayed began:
" 'O now in danger tried, now known in arms
Not to be overpowered, companions dear,
Found worthy not of liberty alone— 420
Too mean pretense—but, what we more affect,
Honor, dominion, glory, and renown;
Who have sustained one day in doubtful fight
(And, if one day, why not eternal days?)
What heaven's Lord had powerfullest to send 425
Against us from about his throne, and judged
Sufficient to subdue us to his will,
But proves not so. Then fallible, it seems,
Of future we may deem him, though till now
Omniscient thought! True is, less firmly armed, 430
Some disadvantage we endured, and pain—
Till now not known, but, known, as soon contemned;
Since now we find this our empyreal form
Incapable of mortal injury,
Imperishable, and, though pierced with wound, 435
Soon closing, and by native vigor healed.
Of evil, then, so small as easy think
The remedy; perhaps more valid arms,
Weapons more violent, when next we meet,
May serve to better us and worse our foes, 440
Or equal what between us made the odds,
In nature none. If other hidden cause
Left them superior, while we can preserve
Unhurt our minds, and understanding sound,

414. **rebellious**. Some word like *host* is to be understood.

Due search and consultation will disclose.' 445
"He sat; and in the assembly next upstood
Nisroch, of Principalities the prime.
As one he stood escaped from cruel fight
Sore toiled, his riven arms to havoc hewn,
And, cloudy in aspéct, thus answering spake: 450
" 'Deliverer from new Lords, leader to free
Enjoyment of our right as gods! yet hard
For gods, and too unequal work, we find
Against unequal arms to fight in pain,
Against unpained, impassive; from which evil 455
Ruin must needs ensue. For what avails
Valor or strength, though matchless, quelled with pain,
Which all subdues, and makes remiss the hands
Of mightiest? Sense of pleasure we may well
Spare out of life, perhaps, and not repine, 460
But live content—which is the calmest life;
But pain is perfect misery, the worst
Of evils, and, excessive, overturns
All patience. He who, therefore, can invent
With what more forcible we may offend 465
Our yet unwounded enemies, or arm
Ourselves with like defense, to me deserves
No less than for deliverance what we owe.'
"Whereto, with look composed, Satan replied:
'Not uninvented that, which thou aright 470
Believ'st so main to our success, I bring.
Which of us who beholds the bright surfáce
Of this ethereous mold whereon we stand—
This continent of spacious heaven, adorned
With plant, fruit, flower ambrosial, gems and gold— 475
Whose eye so superficially surveys
These things as not to mind from whence they grow
Deep under ground: materials dark and crude,
Of spiritous and fiery spume, till, touched
With heaven's ray, and tempered, they shoot forth 480
So beauteous, opening to the ambient light?
These in their dark nativity the deep
Shall yield us, pregnant with infernal flame;
Which, into hollow engines long and round
Thick-rammed, at the other bore with touch of fire 485
Dilated and infuriate, shall send forth
From far, with thundering noise, among our foes
Such implements of mischief as shall dash
To pieces and o'erwhelm whatever stands
Adverse, that they shall fear we have disarmed 490
The Thunderer of his only dreaded bolt.
Nor long shall be our labor; yet ere dawn
Effect shall end our wish. Meanwhile revive;
Abandon fear; to strength and counsel joined
Think nothing hard, much less to be despaired.' 495
"He ended; and his words their drooping cheer
Enlightened, and their languished hope revived.
The invention all admired, and each how he
To be the inventor missed; so easy it seemed
Once found, which yet unfound most would have thought 500
Impossible! Yet, haply, of thy race,
In future days, if malice should abound,
Someone, intent on mischief, or inspired

447. **Nisroch**, an Assyrian god. **prime**, chief. 455. **impassive**, unsuffering. 471. **main**, essential.

479. **spume**, froth, foam. 498. **admired**, wondered at.

With devilish machination, might devise
Like instrument to plague the sons of men 505
For sin, on war and mutual slaughter bent.
Forthwith from council to the work they flew;
None arguing stood; innumerable hands
Were ready; in a moment up they turned
Wide the celestial soil, and saw beneath 510
The originals of Nature in their crude
Conception; sulphurous and nitrous foam
They found, they mingled, and, with subtle art
Concocted and adusted, they reduced
To blackest grain, and into store conveyed. 515
Part hidden veins digged up—nor hath this earth
Entrails unlike—of mineral and stone,
Whereof to found their engines and their balls
Of missive ruin; part incentive reed
Provide, pernicious with one touch to fire. 520
So all ere day-spring, under conscious night,
Secret they finished, and in order set,
With silent circumspection, unespied.
"Now, when fair morn orient in heaven appeared,
Up rose the victor Angels, and to arms
The matin trumpet sung. In arms they stood 526
Of golden panoply, refulgent host,
Soon banded; others from the dawning hills
Looked round, and scouts each coast light-arméd scour,
Each quarter, to descry the distant foe,
Where lodged, or whither fled, or if for fight, 531
In motion or in halt. Him soon they met
Under spread ensigns moving nigh, in slow
But firm battalion. Back with speediest sail
Zophiel, of Cherubim the swiftest wing,
Came flying, and in mid-air aloud thus cried: 536

514. **adusted**, dried to powder. 526. **matin**, morning.

" 'Arm, warriors, arm for fight! The foe at hand,
Whom fled we thought, will save us long pursuit
This day; fear not his flight; so thick a cloud
He comes, and settled in his face I see 540
Sad resolution and secure. Let each
His adamantine coat gird well, and each
Fit well his helm, gripe fast his orbéd shield,
Borne even or high; for this day will pour down,
If I conjecture aught, no drizzling shower, 545
But rattling storm of arrows barbed with fire.'
"So warned he them, aware themselves, and soon
In order, quit of all impediment.
Instant, without disturb, they took alarm,
And onward move embattled; when, behold, 550
Not distant far, with heavy pace the foe
Approaching gross and huge, in hollow cube
Training his devilish enginery, impaled
On every side with shadowing squadrons deep,
To hide the fraud. At interview both stood 555
Awhile; but suddenly at head appeared
Satan, and thus was heard commanding loud:
" 'Vanguard, to right and left the front unfold,
That all may see who hate us how we seek
Peace and composure, and with open breast 560
Stand ready to receive them, if they like
Our overture, and turn not back perverse.
But that I doubt. However, witness Heaven!
Heaven, witness thou anon! while we discharge
Freely our part. Ye, who appointed stand, 565

548. **impediment**, baggage. 552. **cube**, square of troops. 553. **Training**, dragging. **impaled**, walled in. 555. **At interview**, face to face, opposed.

Do as you have in charge, and briefly touch
What we propound, and loud that all may hear.'
"So scoffing in ambiguous words, he scarce
Had ended, when to right and left the front
Divided, and to either flank retired; 570
Which to our eyes discovered, new and strange,
A triple mounted row of pillars laid
On wheels (for like to pillars most they seemed,
Or hollowed bodies made of oak or fir,
With branches lopped, in wood or mountain felled), 575
Brass, iron, stony mold, had not their mouths
With hideous orifice gaped on us wide,
Portending hollow truce. At each, behind,
A Seraph stood, and in his hand a reed
Stood waving tipped with fire; while we, suspense, 580
Collected stood within our thoughts amused.
Not long! for sudden all at once their reeds
Put forth, and to a narrow vent applied
With nicest touch. Immediate in a flame,
But soon obscured with smoke, all heaven appeared, 585
From those deep-throated engines belched, whose roar
Emboweled with outrageous noise the air,
And all her entrails tore, disgorging foul
Their devilish glut, chained thunderbolts and hail
Of iron globes; which, on the victor host
Leveled, with such impetuous fury smote 591
That whom they hit none on their feet might stand,
Though standing else as rocks, but down they fell
By thousands, Angel on Archangel rolled,
The sooner for their arms. Unarmed, they might 595
Have easily, as Spirits, evaded swift
By quick contraction or remove; but now
Foul dissipation followed, and forced rout;
Nor served it to relax their serried files.
What should they do? If on they rushed, repulse 600
Repeated, and indecent overthrow
Doubled, would render them yet more despised,
And to their foes a laughter—for in view
Stood ranked of Seraphim another row,
In posture to displode their second tire
Of thunder; back defeated to return 606
They worse abhorred. Satan beheld their plight,
And to his mates thus in derision called:
" 'O friends, why come not on these victors proud?
Erewhile they fierce were coming; and, when we, 610
To entertain them fair with open front
And breast (what could we more?), propounded terms
Of composition, straight they changed their minds,
Flew off, and into strange vagaries fell,
As they would dance. Yet for a dance they seemed 615
Somewhat extravagant and wild; perhaps
For joy of offered peace. But I suppose,
If our proposals once again were heard,
We should compel them to a quick result.'
"To whom thus Belial, in like gamesome mood: 620
'Leader, the terms we sent were terms of weight,
Of hard contents, and full of force urged home,
Such as we might perceive amused them all,
And stumbled many. Who receives them right
Had need from head to foot well understand; 625
Not understood, this gift they have besides—
They show us when our foes walk not upright.'
"So they among themselves in pleasant vein

599. **serried**, closely massed. 620. **Belial**, a Hebrew word meaning *worthless*. Frequently an evil man in the Bible is called a son of Belial. Milton personifies the word as a subtle, deceitful spirit.

Stood scoffing, heightened in their thoughts beyond
All doubt of victory; Eternal Might 630
To match with their inventions they presumed
So easy, and of his thunder made a scorn,
And all his host derided, while they stood
Awhile in trouble. But they stood not long;
Rage prompted them at length, and found them arms 635
Against such hellish mischief fit to oppose.
Forthwith (behold the excellence, the power,
Which God hath in his mighty Angels placed!)
Their arms away they threw, and to the hills
(For earth hath this variety from heaven
Of pleasure situate in hill and dale) 641
Light as the lightning-glimpse they ran, they flew;
From their foundations, loosening to and fro,
They plucked the seated hills, with all their load,
Rocks, waters, woods, and, by the shaggy tops 645
Uplifting, bore them in their hands. Amaze,
Be sure, and terror, seized the rebel host,
When coming toward them so dread they saw
The bottom of the mountains upward turned,
Till on those cursed engines' triple row
They saw them whelmed, and all their confidence 651
Under the weight of mountains buried deep;
Themselves invaded next, and on their heads
Main promontories flung, which in the air
Came shadowing, and oppressed whole legions armed. 655
Their armor helped their harm, crushed in and bruised,
Into their substance pent — which wrought them pain
Implacable, and many a dolorous groan,
Long struggling underneath, ere they could wind
Out of such prison, though Spirits of purest light, 660
Purest at first, now gross by sinning grown.
The rest, in imitation, to like arms
Betook them, and the neighboring hills uptore;
So hills amid the air encountered hills,
Hurled to and fro with jaculation dire,
That underground they fought in dismal shade. 666
Infernal noise! war seemed a civil game
To this uproar; horrid confusion heaped
Upon confusion rose. And now all heaven
Had gone to wrack, with ruin overspread, 670
Had not the Almighty Father, where he sits
Shrined in his sanctuary of heaven secure,
Consulting on the sum of things, foreseen
This tumult, and permitted all, advised,
That his great purpose he might so fulfill, 675
To honor his Anointed Son, avenged
Upon his enemies, and to declare
All power on him transferred. Whence to his Son,
The assessor of his throne, he thus began:
"'Effulgence of my glory, Son beloved, 680
Son in whose face invisible is beheld
Visibly, what by Deity I am,
And in whose hand what by decree I do,
Second Omnipotence! two days are passed,
Two days, as we compute the days of heaven, 685
Since Michael and his Powers went forth to tame
These disobedient. Sore hath been their fight,
As likeliest was when two such foes met armed;
For to themselves I left them; and thou know'st

654. **Main**, mighty.

665. **jaculation**, tossing. 679. **assessor**, He who sits beside. Christ is spoken of as sitting at the right hand of God.

Equal in their creation they were formed,
Save what sin hath impaired—which yet hath wrought
Insensibly, for I suspend their doom;
Whence in perpetual fight they needs must last
Endless, and no solution will be found.
War wearied hath performed what war can do,
And to disordered rage let loose the reins,
With mountains, as with weapons, armed; which makes
Wild work in heaven, and dangerous to the main.
Two days are, therefore, passed; the third is thine.
For thee I have ordained it, and thus far
Have suffered, that the glory may be thine
Of ending this great war, since none but thou
Can end it. Into thee such virtue and grace
Immense I have transfused, that all may know
In heaven and hell thy power above compare,
And this perverse commotion governed thus,
To manifest thee worthiest to be Heir
Of all things—to be Heir, and to be King
By sacred unction, thy deservéd right.
Go, then, thou Mightiest, in thy Father's might;
Ascend my chariot; guide the rapid wheels
That shake heaven's basis; bring forth all my war;
My bow and thunder, my almighty arms,
Gird on, and sword upon thy puissant thigh;
Pursue these Sons of Darkness, drive them out
From all heaven's bounds into the utter deep;
There let them learn, as likes them, to despise
God, and Messiah, his anointed King.'

698. **the main**, either the world or the universe. 709. **unction**, anointing, as the kings of Israel and Judah were anointed with holy oil at their consecration and coronation.

"He said, and on his Son with rays direct
Shone full. He all his Father full expressed
Ineffably into his face received;
And thus the Filial Godhead answering spake:
" 'O Father, O Supreme of Heavenly Thrones,
First, Highest, Holiest, Best, thou always seek'st
To glorify thy Son; I always thee,
As is most just. This I my glory account,
My exaltation, and my whole delight,
That thou in me, well pleased, declar'st thy will
Fulfilled, which to fulfill is all my bliss.
Scepter and power, thy giving, I assume,
And gladlier shall resign when in the end
Thou shalt be all in all, and I in thee
Forever, and in me all whom thou lov'st
But whom thou hat'st I hate, and can put on
Thy terrors, as I put thy mildness on,
Image of thee in all things; and shall soon,
Armed with thy might, rid heaven of these rebelled,
To their prepared ill mansion driven down,
To chains of darkness and the undying worm,
That from thy just obedience could revolt,
Whom to obey is happiness entire.
Then shall thy Saints, unmixed, and from the impure
Far separate, circling thy holy Mount,
Unfeignéd hallelujahs to thee sing,
Hymns of high praise, and I among them chief.'
"So said, he, o'er his scepter bowing, rose
From the right hand of Glory where he sat;
And the third sacred morn began to shine,
Dawning through heaven. Forth rushed with whirlwind sound
The chariot of Paternal Deity,
Flashing thick flames, wheel within wheel; undrawn,

739. **undying worm**, eternal corruption.

Itself instinct with spirit, but convoyed
By four cherubic shapes. Four faces each
Had wondrous; as with stars, their bodies all
And wings were set with eyes; with eyes the wheels 755
Of beryl, and careering fires between;
Over their heads a crystal firmament,
Whereon a sapphire throne, inlaid with pure
Amber and colors of the showery arch
He, in celestial panoply all armed 760
Of radiant Urim, work divinely wrought,
Ascended; at his right hand Victory
Sat eagle-winged; beside him hung his bow,
And quiver, with three-bolted thunder stored;
And from about him fierce effusion rolled 765
Of smoke and bickering flame and sparkles dire.
Attended with ten thousand thousand Saints,
He onward came; far off his coming shone;
And twenty thousand—I their number heard—
Chariots of God, half on each hand, were seen. 770
He on the wings of Cherub rode sublime
On the crystalline sky, in sapphire throned—
Illustrious far and wide, but by his own
First seen. Them unexpected joy surprised
When the great ensign of Messiah blazed 775
Aloft, by Angels borne, his sign in heaven;
Under whose conduct Michael soon reduced
His army, circumfused on either wing,
Under their Head embodied all in one.
Before him Power Divine his way prepared; 780
At his command the uprooted hills retired
Each to his place; they heard his voice, and went
Obsequious; heaven his wonted face renewed,
And with fresh flowerets hill and valley smiled.
"This saw his hapless foes, but stood obdured, 785
And to rebellious fight rallied their Powers,
Insensate, hope conceiving from despair.
In heavenly Spirits could such perverseness dwell?
But to convince the proud what signs avail,
Or wonders move the obdurate to relent? 790
They, hardened more by what might most reclaim,
Grieving to see his glory, at the sight
Took envy, and, aspiring to his height,
Stood reëmbattled fierce, by force or fraud
Weening to prosper, and at length prevail 795
Against God and Messiah, or to fall
In universal ruin last; and now
To final battle drew, disdaining flight,
Or faint retreat; when the great Son of God
To all his host on either hand thus spake: 800
"'Stand still in bright array, ye Saints; here stand,
Ye Angels armed; this day from battle rest.
Faithful hath been your warfare, and of God
Accepted, fearless in his righteous cause;
And, as ye have received, so have ye done, 805
Invincibly. But of this cursed crew
The punishment to other hand belongs;
Vengeance is his, or whose he sole appoints.
Number to this day's work is not ordained,
Nor multitude; stand only and behold
God's indignation on these godless poured 811
By me. Not you, but me, they have despised,
Yet envied; against me is all their rage,

752. **instinct**, filled from within, inspired. 761. **Urim.** Exodus xxviii, 30, speaks of Urim and Thummim as to be borne upon the breast of the high priest. Though nowhere described, we know they were used by the Hebrews to ascertain the will of God. 777. **reduced**, rearranged.

785. **obdured**, obdurate.

Because the Father, to whom in heaven supreme
Kingdom and power and glory appertains,
Hath honored me, according to his will.
Therefore to me their doom he hath assigned,
That they may have their wish, to try with me
In battle which the stronger proves—they all,
Or I alone against them; since by strength
They measure all, of other excellence
Not emulous, nor care who them excels;
Nor other strife with them do I vouchsafe.'
"So spake the Son, and into terror changed
His countenance, too severe to be beheld,
And full of wrath bent on his enemies.
At once the Four spread out their starry wings
With dreadful shade contiguous, and the orbs
Of his fierce chariot rolled, as with the sound
Of torrent floods, or of a numerous host.
He on his impious foes right onward drove,
Gloomy as night. Under his burning wheels
The steadfast Empyrean shook throughout,
All but the throne itself of God. Full soon
Among them he arrived, in his right hand
Grasping ten thousand thunders, which he sent
Before him, such as in their souls infixed
Plagues. They, astonished, all resistance lost,
All courage; down their idle weapons dropped;
O'er shields, and helms, and helméd heads he rode
Of Thrones and mighty Seraphim prostráte,
That wished the mountains now might be again
Thrown on them, as a shelter from his ire.
Nor less on either side tempestuous fell
His arrows, from the fourfold-visaged Four,
Distinct with eyes, and from the living wheels,
Distinct alike with multitude of eyes;
One spirit in them ruled, and every eye
Glared lightning, and shot forth pernicious fire
Among the accursed, that withered all their strength,
And of their wonted vigor left them drained,
Exhausted, spiritless, afflicted, fallen.
Yet half his strength he put not forth, but checked
His thunder in mid-volley; for he meant
Not to destroy, but root them out of heaven.
The overthrown he raised, and, as a herd
Of goats or timorous flock together thronged,
Drove them before him thunderstruck, pursued
With terrors and with furies to the bounds
And crystal wall of heaven; which, opening wide,
Rolled inward, and a spacious gap disclosed
Into the wasteful deep. The monstrous sight
Strook them with horror backward; but far worse
Urged them behind. Headlong themselves they threw
Down from the verge of heaven; eternal wrath
Burned after them to the bottomless pit.
"Hell heard the unsufferable noise; hell saw
Heaven ruining from heaven, and would have fled
Affrighted; but strict Fate had cast too deep
Her dark foundations, and too fast had bound.
Nine days they fell; confounded Chaos roared,
And felt tenfold confusion in their fall
Through his wild anarchy; so huge a rout
Encumbered him with ruin. Hell at last,

Yawning, received them whole, and on them closed—
Hell, their fit habitation, fraught with fire
Unquenchable, the house of woe and pain.
Disburdened heaven rejoiced, and soon repaired
Her mural breach, returning whence it rolled.
Sole victor, from the expulsion of his foes
Messiah his triumphal chariot turned.
To meet him all his Saints, who silent stood
Eye-witnesses of his almighty acts,
With jubilee advanced; and, as they went,
Shaded with branching palm, each order bright
Sung triumph, and him sung victorious King,
Son, Heir, and Lord, to him dominion given,
Worthiest to reign. He celebrated rode,
Triumphant through mid-heaven, into the courts
And temple of his mighty Father throned
On high; who into glory him received,
Where now he sits at the right hand of bliss.

"Thus, measuring things in heaven by things on earth,
At thy request, and that thou may'st beware
By what is past, to thee I have revealed
What might have else to human race been hid—
The discord which befell, and war in heaven
Among the Angelic Powers, and the deep fall
Of those too high aspiring who rebelled
With Satan; he who envies now thy state,
Who now is plotting how he may seduce
Thee also from obedience, that, with him
Bereaved of happiness, thou may'st partake
His punishment, eternal misery;
Which would be all his solace and revenge,
As a despite done against the Most High,
Thee once to gain companion of his woe.
But listen not to his temptations; warn
Thy weaker; let it profit thee to have heard,
By terrible example, the reward
Of disobedience. Firm they might have stood,
Yet fell. Remember, and fear to transgress." c. 1658 - c. 1665 (1667)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

General References

POPULAR AND LITERARY EPIC

General Note. Instead of giving extended critical references, it is preferable here to refer the student to a few standard works on the epic from the bibliographies of which he can branch out in any direction. Since general treatises on the epic usually omit adequate notice of the Celtic epics, mention is here made of one or two literary histories of Ireland which include the necessary material.

Abercrombie, Lascelles, *The Epic.* Doran, New York (no date). A book of ninety-six pages in which the author gives a clear general survey of the nature and history of the epic. It will answer the needs of the general student.

Chadwick, H. M., *The Heroic Age.* Cambridge University Press, London, 1912. A scholarly treatise on the heroic age both in Greece and England, describing the society which produced the popular epic.

Clark, John, *A History of Epic Poetry.* Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh, 1900. A somewhat more complete treatment than that of Abercrombie, both in the number of epics studied and in criticism. A valuable book for the general student, though somewhat superficial.

Dixon, W. MacN., *English Epic and Heroic Poetry.* Dutton, New York, 1912. The most comprehensive treatise written on English narrative poetry, surveying the type from Anglo-Saxon times through the nineteenth century.

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Hart, W. M., *Ballad and Epic.* Harvard Studies and Notes, vol. XI, Boston, 1907. A study of the types of early narrative verse.

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Hyde, Douglas, *A Literary History of Ireland.* Unwin, London, 1899. An excellent literary history of Ireland; the first part explains the growth of literature in the Celtic heroic age.

Ker, W. P., *Epic and Romance.* Macmillan, New York, 1922. An accurate and scholarly treatise on the heroic age. It is difficult reading, but explains clearly the research upon which are based present beliefs about the conditions in which the popular epic arose.

Lawrence, W. W., *Beowulf and Epic Tradition.* Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1928. A study of the background and the various episodes of the epic.

O'Conor, Norreys J., *Changing Ireland.* Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1924. The first three chapters contain an interesting picture of early Celtic literature.

List of Epics

The following list is not intended to be complete, but merely to represent in easily available editions and in good translations those epics which have exercised a considerable literary influence.

A. Popular Epics

1. Greek

The Iliad. An epic poem of twenty-four books in dactylic hexameter which describes the disasters brought upon the Greek army at the siege of Troy because of the wrath of Achilles, the greatest Greek champion. The poem is attributed to Homer. No translation approaches the grandeur of the original. In poetry Chapman (2 vols., Temple Edition, Dent) and Pope (World's Classics, Oxford Press) are the best. In prose the translation by Lang, Leaf, and Myer (Macmillan) is by far the best. The probable date of composition of the poem was during the ninth century B. C. It was first written down during the tyranny of Pisistratus of Athens between 560 and 530 B. C. The style of *The Iliad* is vivid and realistic.

The Odyssey. An epic poem of twenty-four books in dactylic hexameter which describes the wanderings of Odysseus after the sack of Troy. The poem is attributed to Homer. As in the case of *The Iliad* no translation approaches the grandeur of the original. In poetry Pope (World's Classics, Oxford Press) is the best translator. In prose G. H. Palmer (Houghton Mifflin) has by far the best version. The probable date of composition of the poem was during the eighth century B. C. It was first written down during the tyranny of Pisistratus of Athens between 550 and 530 B. C. The style of *The Odyssey* is romantic and imaginative.

2. French

The Song of Roland. An epic poem of about 4000 decasyllabic lines grouped according to assonance in strophes of varying lengths. The poem tells how Roland, the nephew of Charlemagne, was cut down with his warriors by the Saracens in the passes of the Pyrenees near Roncevaux, while serving as a rear guard to the army of Charlemagne, who was passing out of Spain to France. The catastrophe was caused by the treachery of a jealous warrior named Ganelon. The poem was probably composed in the tenth century, since the event upon which it is based occurred August 15, 778, and since at the battle of Hastings in 1066 the Norman army of William was preceded by the minstrel Taillefer, who sang the exploits of Roland. No English poetic translation reproduces the assonance of the original. The best prose translation is that of Miss Isobel Butler (Houghton Mifflin).

3. Spanish

The *Cid.* An epic poem of approximately 3700 lines of irregular metrical length grouped loosely by assonance in strophes of varying lengths. It tells of the heroic deeds of Rodrigo Diaz de Bivar, surnamed "The Cid," or "The Lord." The events upon which the poem is based occurred in the eleventh century. The poem was probably composed in the twelfth century. The best translation available is either that of J. Ormsby (Stechert, 1915) or Southey (several editions available).

4. Anglo-Saxon

Beowulf. An epic poem of approximately 3000 roughly accentual alliterative lines with two principal stresses in each half line, which relates the deeds of the hero Beowulf—first, against the monster Grendel and his mother, both of whom had harassed the tribe of the Danes ruled by Hrothgar; and second, of his battle with a dragon which was ravaging the land of his own people, the Geats, in which battle Beowulf lost his life. One of the events upon which the poem is based occurred about 520 A. D. The poem was probably composed by the Anglo-Saxon bards before the migration to England in the fifth and sixth centuries. Its final form was attained in England about the seventh century A. D., and it was probably written down shortly after. No poetic translation is completely successful. Both the version of Child (Houghton Mifflin) and that of Gummere (Macmillan) are satisfactory.

5. Celtic

Tain Bó Cuailnge (i. e., *The Cattle Raid of Cooley*). The material of the Celtic epics is partly in prose, partly in poetry. *The Cattle Raid of Cooley* is an account of a war between Conchubar, king of Ulster, and Ailell and Maeve, king and queen of Connaught, over a wonderful brown bull in the possession of Conchubar. The main character is the young hero Cuchulain, who fights on the side of Conchubar. There are many beautiful episodes, among which one of the finest tells the tragic death of the sons of Usnach, or the life and death of Deirdre. Whatever historic background there may be for the epic is based upon events which took place about the first century A. D. The epic was probably brought into its present form between the seventh and ninth centuries A. D., and was written down in the tenth century A. D. The best translation is that of Lady Gregory, entitled *Cuchulain of Muirthemne* (John Murray, London, 1902).

The *Fianna, or the Story of the Deeds of Finn and of the Children of Ossian*. A fragmentary epic, partly in prose and partly in poetry, which relates the deeds of Finn and of his picked band of warriors who repelled all invasions of Ireland. The deeds of Ossian, son of Finn, and the deeds of the sons of Ossian are also included. The historic facts upon which the epic is based occurred about the fourth century A. D. It is impossible to date the formation of the epic more closely than between the seventh and ninth centuries A. D. The epic was probably written down in the tenth century A. D. The best translation is that of Lady Gregory, entitled *Gods and Fighting Men* (John Murray, London, 1904).

6. Scandinavian

The *Volsung Saga*. The epic lays of the Scandinavian tribes have survived either in fragmentary ballad form, or in prose. It is necessary to mention these lays and the prose sagas which came from them because of the fact that they influenced powerfully German epic poetry and German medieval romance, were profoundly influential in starting the romantic movement in English poetry in the nineteenth century, and since that time have commanded the attention of English poets, especially of William Morris. The story of the Volsungs is the most famous example of Scandinavian epic story. It has been well translated by William Morris (numerous editions are available).

The *Elder Edda*, a collection of the fragmentary Scandinavian epic lays translated in the *Poetic Edda*, by H. A. Bellows (American Scandinavian Foundation, New York, 1923).

7. German

The *Nibelungenlied* (i. e., *The Lay of the Nibelungs*). An epic poem of approximately 2400 four-line stanzas. The meter is roughly accentual, with three stresses to each half line, each stanza being composed of two rimed couplets. The poem, which relates the tragic story of Siegfried, including the vengeance meted out to his murderers, is probably derived from a Norse Saga. The *Gudrun* is a companion epic, but it is not so well known as the *Nibelungenlied*. In its present form the *Nibelungenlied* is medieval and was composed in the twelfth century, but there is no doubt as to the great antiquity of the material upon which the present version is based. Several good translations are available. In verse that of W. N. Lettsom (London, 1894, but frequently reprinted) is most acceptable, and the same may be said for the prose translation of D. B. Shumway (Houghton Mifflin).

8. Finnish

The *Kalevala, or The Land of Heroes*. An epic poem of approximately 22,000 unrimed octosyllabic lines, in which are related the creation of the world and the magic adventures of the three sons of Kalevala or Finland—Vainamoinen, Ilmarinen, and Lemminkainen, centering about their love for Louhi, who lives in Pohjola, the country of the Arctic North. The poem, the material of which is very old, was taken down from the

lips of peasants during the early nineteenth century by a Finnish scholar. The *Kalevala*, therefore, is the most perfect example of how a popular epic is handed down orally for generations. The most recent literary manifestation of its influence is Longfellow's *Hiawatha*. The most complete translation is in verse by W. F. Kirby (Everyman Edition).

B. Literary Epics

1. Roman

The Aeneid, Vergil. An epic poem of twelve books written in unrimed dactylic hexameter, about the adventures of Aeneas in proceeding from Troy to found the Roman state. Vergil fortified his literary technique in the *Aeneid* by a skillful borrowing from the substance of the Homeric epics, and by a refined and chastened adaptation of their style. The poem was composed between 29 and 19 B. C. The best verse translations are those of Dryden (several editions), Conington (several editions), and T. C. Williams (Houghton Mifflin). In prose that of J. W. Mackail (Macmillan) is most satisfactory.

2. Italian

The *Divine Comedy*, Dante. An epic poem of one hundred cantos divided into three parts: the Inferno, thirty-four cantos; the Purgatorio, thirty-three cantos; and the Paradiso, thirty-three cantos. It reveals the medieval conception of the universe as seen through the medium of a dream in which the poet, with Vergil as his first guide, and Beatrice as his second, passes through hell, purgatory, and heaven in order that he may be united mystically with the spirit of his dead love, Beatrice. The poem affords, incidentally, a vivid picture of medieval life in Dante's time. The verse is hendecasyllabic, arranged in rimed tercets, of which the first and third lines of a tercet rime, while the second line rimes with the first and third lines of the next tercet. The poem was composed between 1290-1321. No translation reproduces the original meter satisfactorily. The most acceptable verse translation is that of Cary (many editions are available), while in prose the translation of C. E. Norton (Houghton Mifflin) is very satisfactory.

Note: Renaissance Italian epics. During the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries several Italian poets were interested in composing literary epics, which combined the machinery of Vergil's *Aeneid* with the stories of medieval chivalry and allegory. The two most famous examples are the *Orlando Furioso* by Ariosto, published 1516 (translated by W. S. Rose, Macmillan), and the *Gerusalemme Liberata* by Tasso, published 1581 (translated by J. H. Whiffen in Spenserian verse, Macmillan). The permanent influence of the poems has not been considerable outside of their own country, but they are as interesting in many ways as the *Faerie Queene*, by Spenser.

3. English

Paradise Lost, Milton. An epic poem in twelve books written in unrimed iambic pentameter. The date of publication was 1667. The subject is the fall of man, set against a background of the revolt of Lucifer and the creation of the world. *Paradise Regained*, a companion epic in four books, published in 1671, relates the temptation of Christ by Satan in the wilderness. The poem is by no means as effective as *Paradise Lost*.

Note: Spenser's *Faerie Queene* is on the line between epic and romance. Its influence as an example of poetic technique has been great, but as a story, it has had only slight influence.

4. German

No literary epics of note have been produced in Germany, but mention should be made of two beautiful romantic epics of chivalry: *Parzifal*, written about 1200 by Wolfram von Eschenbach (translated by Jessie L. Weston, David Nutt, London), and *Tristan*, written about 1150 by Gottfried von Strassburg (Jessie L. Weston has published an abbreviated translation in two volumes, David Nutt, London).

5. Scandinavian

No literary epics of note were written by the Scandinavians, but the *Prose Edda*, a collection of epic material made by Snorri Sturlason (translated by A. G. Brodeur for the American Scandinavian Foundation, New York, 1916), influenced subsequent Germanic literature to a considerable degree. The same may be said in a lesser degree of the *Heimskringla or Saga of the Kings* written by Snorri Sturlason, of which the *Saga of Olaf* has been translated by S. Laing in the Everyman Library. A vast collection of heroic prose sagas also exists.

6. American

Hiawatha, Longfellow. An epic of the adventures of the Indian hero, Hiawatha, written in 1855. Longfellow drew the style and scheme of his poem from the *Kalevala*, a Finnish popular epic.

CHAPTER II

MEDIEVAL NARRATIVE POETRY AND MODERN IMITATIONS

AN INTRODUCTION

I. The Spirit of Medieval Literature

When William of Normandy completed the conquest of England, he was probably unaware that he had incidentally effected both the termination of that period of English literature known to us as Anglo-Saxon, and the beginning of that period known to us as Middle English. As William and his barons were Norman French, any appreciation of English literature was far from their thoughts. They were steeped in the continental medieval tradition, and it was this tradition which was largely to govern the realm of England, both political and literary, until the coming of the Tudors in 1485 inaugurated both the Renaissance and the period of modern English history and literature.

The thought of the Middle Ages, whether expressed in government, teaching, religion, or literature, was dominated by the tradition of authority emanating from the Roman Empire and the Christian Church. Although the Roman Empire had long since ceased to exist as a fact, yet the slowly forming nations of Europe looked back on it with awe and preserved scrupulously traditions which truly or falsely they associated with its manners, customs, literature, and government. A similar glory had come to surround the history and doctrines of the early Christian Church and its visible descendant organization, until the creeds and teachings of the early saints and fathers were involved in an ever-increasing bulk of authorized interpretative comment. The term Scholasticism, which symbolizes all the formal teaching of the Middle Ages, means in brief the teaching of authorized doctrines by authorized teachers. The doctrines were those which had been accepted and handed down by the Christian Church, and the teachers were the clergy. Consequently, new lines of thought were not initiated; instead, the heritage of the past was gathered together and commented upon.

The Schoolmen delighted in interpretation, harmonization, and codification, and the direction of medieval thought lay in their hands. It was inevitable, therefore, that some point of fusion should be found by them for the traditions of the Roman Empire and the early Christian Church. A Holy Roman Empire might be impossible as a fact, but it was possible as an ideal. Accordingly the Schoolmen attempted to realize it through their titular leader, the Pope, who crowned Charlemagne Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire at Rome on Christmas day 800 A.D. Out of the new ideal that the Pope was the ecclesiastical head of Christendom, and that the Emperor was under him as secular ruler—or perhaps one had better say the amalgamation of two old ideals—sprang the conception of a feudal government and a system of chivalry which knew no national boundaries. Feudalism was practical enough as a method of government to function without an interpretative literature; but chivalry, which embodied the ideals of the nobility, needed such literary interpretation and received it in a type of narrative known as the romance, which flourished between the twelfth and the fourteenth centuries.

But it would be a mistake to suppose that the literature of the Middle Ages was confined to chivalric romances, or that the noble class was the only class provided with literature. It is true that until printing was invented, about 1450, books were circulated only in manuscript and could be possessed

only by the nobles or the larger monastic foundations; and we should recall that literature as such was kept alive chiefly by the clergy, in whose libraries remained the manuscripts of classical antiquity. Yet the common people still had their unwritten popular ballads and fabliaux, and the clergy sought to instruct their congregations in their religious duties by means of didactic stories, saints' lives, moral examples gathered from the church fathers, and the Bible itself. But while many variations of the poetic narrative were developed during the Middle Ages, the chief interest of every social class seemed to lie in story-telling, and each class had its variant of the type. For the knight it was the romance; for the priest it was a legend of a saint, a story from a sermon book, or the Bible; for the peasant it was either ballad or fabliau, the latter being a short story running from beast fables to rather salty chronicles of domestic misadventures. There were other variations of the narrative type, but these predominated, and it is of them that we think chiefly in recalling the medieval narrative.

True to the medieval instinct for codification, the professional minstrels arranged their romances in cycles about the chief chivalric characters; the priests arranged collections of the lives of the saints, sermon books with stories suitable for any occasion, and manuals setting forth examples of what had happened to those who had professed scrupulously any of the cardinal vices or virtues; while the jongleurs, or professional entertainers of the folk, with the help, perhaps, of some not too churchly priests, gathered together collections of fabliaux, folk tales, and ballads. The style of these narratives was as stereotyped as their content. The medieval story-teller preferred a moral to an interest in human life, and his figures are superficially as unlifelike as the tapestries which rippled in the windy castle halls or the sculptured figures which adorned the cathedrals. But like Gothic tapestry and sculpture, medieval literature has frequently an inherent vigor and humor, or beauty and spiritual aspiration, which not even the dictates of scholasticism and chivalry could completely eradicate.

We are concerned only with the English development of the medieval narrative, especially with the medieval romance and its modern imitations, and with Chaucer, the father of modern English narrative poetry, in whose stories we catch not only a glimpse of what medieval folk tales were, but what their material might become in the hands of one who fixed his eyes directly on life.

II. The Romances of Chivalry

Feudalism and chivalry were destined to furnish one of the chief themes of Middle English literature. The medium for their expression was the so-called romance of chivalry, and the audience was the small group of feudal lords and ladies who ruled over the conquered Anglo-Saxon population. In many ways the age of medieval romance was similar to the epic age which had preceded it. In both ages one literary type represented the code of the dominant group, though the epic appealed to a wider circle than the romance. Both types of poetry sought to instill in the listeners the ideals of the group to which they belonged, both dealt with the exploits of heroes whose stories were drawn from a mythical past, and both were composed by minstrels—in epic times known as "scôps," and in medieval times as troubadours and jongleurs. But here the similarity ends. The composition of the romances of chivalry differed somewhat from that of the popular epic. The chivalric code with its attendant ideas about courtly love was frequently discussed by knights and ladies, either informally, as we shall see in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, or formally, as in the so-called Courts of Love. Moreover, the troubadours, who were frequently wealthy men of noble birth, traveled extensively from court to court, singing their own lyrics and romances.

Medieval romances confessedly inculcated the ideals and code of conduct of chivalry and of courtly love. Through the stories of valiant knights, proper etiquette for all occasions was taught either on the positive or the negative side, and a knowledge of romances was held to be a necessary accomplishment of knighthood. But as the blighting hand of medieval allegory and didacticism fell heavily upon the romances, many of their figures became stiff and lifeless symbols, who moved only as the etiquette of chivalry

dictated. Fortunately, the continental yearning for allegory and symbolism was accompanied in England by such intense love of a story for its own sake, interwoven with a strand of Celtic imagination, that in certain English romances the characters stand out in the flaming beauty of youth, untrammeled by the conventional expressions of the average romance.

Medieval romances were not native to England before the Norman Conquest, when the last of the Anglo-Saxon warrior bands went down to defeat before the new medieval continental chivalry. For two hundred years after the Conquest such romances as were created in England were written in French at the court, or in the feudal castle. On the Continent romances of chivalry flourished during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and decayed just at the time the Holy Roman Empire was losing its power before the approaching Renaissance and the rise of nationalism in Europe. Meanwhile a large number of romances were written in French at the court of the Anglo-Norman kings. The material from which these romances were written, whether on the Continent or in England, was drawn in general from three sources: stories of Greece and Rome about the heroes of classical antiquity, metamorphosed into knights; stories of France, chiefly about Charlemagne and his knights; and stories of Britain, chiefly about Arthur and his knights. Now although we are interested mainly in the last group, we must pause long enough to explain how the troubadour adapted for his purposes the material contained in the other groups.

The myths and history of Greece and Rome were handed down to the Middle Ages in prose summaries. However, these dry compilations did not dismay the inventive troubadour, who straightway transformed the heroes of Homer and Vergil or the quasi-historical figures of the Roman Empire into medieval knights, who lived in castles and followed the way of life advocated by chivalry. To us it seems not merely anachronistic but amusing to notice the transformation of heathen sorcerers and prophets into Christian priests, and to hear Andromache, Cressida, and Helen speak as medieval ladies. Yet the medieval audience was blissfully ignorant of any such inconsistency; for, as it was their ambition to trace their lineage back to Greek and Roman heroes, they were willing to take much for granted.

The Charlemagne legends underwent a similar metamorphosis. The great emperor appeared not merely as a shining star of chivalry and feudalism, but as the man in whom the traditions of the Roman Empire and of the Christian Church were united under the mystic and somewhat nebulous title of Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. That Charlemagne must have been ignorant of the niceties of chivalry was fortunately veiled from the adoring gaze of knightly posterity by the mists of adulation which raised him to the heights of the great mythical patron of chivalry. With him were raised his twelve peers, chief of whom were Roland and Oliver. To the feudal courts of continental Europe Charlemagne symbolized, with a large basis of historic truth, the foundation of their greatness, and to him they could with ease ascribe the virtues of a chivalric saint.

During the first two hundred years of Norman rule in England, when the court and the feudal nobility were content to consider themselves still part and parcel of the Continent, the romances of Greece, Rome, and Charlemagne satisfied them. But as the center of their lives and interests shifted to England, and they perceived that their destiny was wrapped up in their English possessions, they felt a desire to build up an English feudal tradition with a body of romance which would rival that of the continental Charlemagne. The Arthurian material as we know it in the early forms of monkish sixth and seventh century chronicles was unpromising enough, but when, in the twelfth century, the Celtic genius of two romancers, Wace and Layamon, coupled on the Continent with the superbly romantic spirit of Chrétien de Troyes, had worked upon it, the figures of Arthur and his knights became as popular as Frankish Charlemagne and his peers. It did not matter that the earliest English accounts had made Arthur nothing more than a British tribal chief who had battled against the Romans, or that in Celtic and Welsh folk tales he and his companions were merely grotesque and superhuman savages. By the end of the thirteenth century the

transfiguration was complete, and Arthur and his knights appeared in knightly perfection with the glory of Celtic imagination playing upon their faces, and the vigor of the old Anglo-Saxon heroes in their hearts. A wonderful fusion of Celtic, Anglo-Saxon, and Norman literary characteristics had taken place, the chief product of which was the Arthurian romances.

These Arthurian romances sprang in part from the tales, or lays, of Brittany. When the Celts were driven from Europe about the third century B.C., they maintained a stronghold in the peninsula of Brittany. Consequently, the Celtic imagination which we have observed in *Deirdre* was operating in Brittany, Wales, and Ireland upon both medieval folklore and the romances of chivalry connected with Arthur. The continental troubadours noted the difference in the romance material of Brittany and in the literary attitude of the Breton poets. Accordingly, the troubadours set the literary productions of these poets apart from the rest of continental medieval romances by the name of Breton lays. The characteristics of these lays are exactly what our reading of Celtic epic material has led us to observe: a vivid and naïve imagination; a love of the supernatural, especially of fairies, magicians, spells, love potions, transformations of human beings into other shapes either human or animal, and a haunting sense of the mystery and beauty of life; the whole being crowned by a radiant and childlike optimism. Moreover, the lack of continuity of purpose which may be noticed in the Celtic sagas kept the Celtic romances much shorter than those of their continental contemporaries, and earned for them the name of lays, or lyric ballads. We should also note that the Bretons never gathered the separate lays concerned with any knight into such groups of romances as the Arthurian cycle was to become in England.

A cycle of romance is a term for a collection of romances which deal with the adventures of a single knight or any closely associated group of knights. Thus there are cycles about many of the chief knights of the Round Table, as well as about the Round Table itself, and the Holy Grail. Each romance was a rather long, rimed narrative, dealing with some phase of chivalric adventures. Yet nearly all the continental medieval romances are so intent upon depicting chivalric ideals, and so bound up by the conventions of the chivalric code, that, as we have said, they emphasize the code at the expense of the emotional experiences of human life. Life was not the main interest; chivalry was.

In England, however, where the native poets were shaping the romances of Arthur, the characteristics of the Anglo-Saxon and the Celt asserted themselves. In some romances the knights are almost somber copies of Beowulf. Such a romance is *King Horn*. In others the Celtic love of fun creeps in, until the austere and courteous attitude of chivalry is nearly banished. Such romances are *The Boy and the Mantle* and *Arthur at the Tarn Wadling*. The fusion of both spirits produced from the Arthurian material certain romances which compare favorably, as vivid and abiding manifestations of racial characteristics and ideals, with the previous achievements of the Anglo-Saxons and the Celts in the epic.

Partly because of its insular position, England did not feel so quickly as did the Continent the forces which led to the decay of feudalism and chivalry in the fourteenth century. In fact, the flourishing of English romance written in English occurred in the fourteenth century and culminated in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, composed about 1375 in the northwest of England. Here, an ancient story, which includes a magician whose conjuring haunt is an old burial mound such as that which contained the ashes of Beowulf, a supernatural test in a decapitation episode, and the enchantress Morgan le Fay, is renovated in the guise of a chivalric romance wherein Sir Gawain, as hero, embodies the virtues of courtesy and chastity for which he was famed. The characters and descriptions are like neither Gothic tapestry nor sculpture. Nature appears as seen by the keen eye of an Anglo-Saxon huntsman, and as colored by the radiant sense of beauty of a Celtic poet, while the characters live and move as vigorously and with the same motives as those who inhabited the Anglo-Saxon and Celtic epic world. Courageous determination to fulfill one's oath, personal reticence and modesty,

a sense of the inscrutability and beauty of life, are again present as in *Beowulf* and *Deirdre*. Even the verse form of the poem marks a fusion of the old and the new, for it is both alliterative and rimed.

In England and on the Continent the age of chivalry ended in the fifteenth century, having outgrown its usefulness. A new social order was arising, due to three distinct causes. The first cause was the ideals of the Renaissance, which replaced the Scholasticism of the Middle Ages by Humanism—a belief in the dignity and worth of the mind of the individual, and in his ability and right to reason and to interpret for himself not only life, but also the Bible and the masterpieces of classical antiquity which were believed to reveal life best. The second cause was the breaking down of the old order of classes by a dearth of labor and a subsequent rise in power of the common people. The third cause was the better economic conditions for the laborer brought about by town life, trade guilds, foreign trade, and the beginning of the age of exploration. The battle-cry of the new era was sounded when Wat Tyler led the peasant rebels to London in 1381:

> When Adam delved and Eve span
> Who was then the gentleman?

All this was very disheartening to the followers of chivalry, for by the Civil Wars of the Roses the nobles had so weakened their strength that it could not be recovered, and when the battle of Bosworth Field, in 1485, ended the reign of Richard III and feudal wars once and for all, England was ready for a new dynasty and a new set of ideals.

Fortunately for us the leaders of the new age did not destroy all literary vestiges of the old age, as happened in the case of the monasteries, libraries, and manuscripts under Henry VIII. In fact, the discovery of printing in the second half of the fifteenth century was to preserve and disseminate literature far more widely than had been done in the Middle Ages. The traditions of chivalry were thus enshrined in permanent literary form by Sir Thomas Malory, who, as a lover of chivalry, saw it fading, and gathered together, while the daylight lasted, the chief versions of the main Arthurian romances and embodied them in the prose romance known to us as *Le Morte Darthur*, written about 1470, and published by Caxton, the first English printer, in 1485. In spite of its many faults and omissions, *Le Morte Darthur* is the most comprehensive collection of Arthurian romances extant, including in addition many romances which have only the most remote connection with Arthur, such as *Tristram and Iseult*. Moreover, it catches perfectly the spirit of medieval romance. With high seriousness and devoted idealism the author sets forth in each romance some tenet of chivalry. He believes still in the chivalric world of magicians and their castles, in dragons, witches, and enchanted forests. To him the chivalric code is still a living ideal, and his faith in it often redeems by a vivid, lifelike, and passionate episode the stiff literary embroidery of the medieval romance with its shallow and conventionalized characterizations and descriptions of nature. Unfortunately, Malory lacks a saving sense of humor. He is, however, unconsciously humorous, as when, after the last battle with Mordred, Gawain writes Lancelot a letter in which he says that he is finishing this epistle two and one half hours before his own death. But this is a small matter, for in all his stories Malory exhibits the ideals and moods which are beloved by the English: a high moral consciousness; tenacity of purpose; clear vision; a sense of the mystery and challenge of life; a belief in the inscrutability of Fate; and, finally, a consciousness of the haunting beauty and significance of nature in the life of man. It is no wonder that Malory, believing firmly in the eternal values and ultimate return of the ideals of chivalry, gave as part of the epitaph of Arthur: "King once and King again to be."

III. The Literature of the People

Because of the stratification of medieval society, we are likely to have our attention caught and held by the topmost layer, where the nobility lived the brilliant and appealing life of chivalry. It was they who built castles, endured sieges, engaged in tourneys, and set forth on crusades. But beneath them were other strata with as real a life,

although they have not left as articulate memorials in architecture or literature—the middle and lower classes, who inhabited the farms and the towns. Though generally illiterate, they loved stories, and they were generously supplied, not only with their own indigenous popular ballads, but with tales drawn from the mighty reservoir of folklore, which knows no nationality. These narratives ranged from sacred to profane, from subjects of high moral import to salacious nothings, from saints' lives to peasant doings, from the supernatural and the monstrous to the commonplace. In reviewing the mass of this material preserved in medieval manuscripts one is struck by the emphasis upon the thing done and not upon the doer, upon the naïve credulity of the audience, and the elemental nature of the appeal made to it. There is nothing subtle about the medieval English folk tale, unless it be a descendant of some European classical original, and even then its edge is usually worn off. More amazing still, there seems to be no first-hand interest in characterization or in an attempt to explain the causes motivating the events of any story. Apparently it was enough to interest the medieval audience that an event should have occurred, and that it was unusual.

Another principle governing English medieval narrative is very difficult for us to appreciate today, but a knowledge of it is essential to an understanding of the Middle Ages, especially of the poetry of Gower and Chaucer. The Middle Ages were bound intellectually by the past, and their general mental attitude was to conserve and accumulate traditions. Consequently, with peasant as with troubadour and cleric, interpretation and adaptation of past performances took the place of originality and invention. A detailed systematization of literary types both in poetry and prose was accompanied by an accumulation of stock examples to be used in exemplifying the creed which had been built up on any subject. The stereotyping of form and material, and the conception that the poet was a moral teacher, were universal. Metrical romances and romance cycles were glorified examples of the chivalric code; sermon books were filled with short stories reaching from classical myth to medieval legend, all ending with a moral and elucidating some belief of the medieval church; while the fabliaux and beast-fables contained lively tales, mocking in manner and concluding with an implied or plainly stated moral.

By the fourteenth century the codification was complete, as is shown in the poetry of John Gower, Chaucer's contemporary and friend, who continued the traditions without assuming a new attitude toward his material, although in his second literary period he saw the manifestations foreshadowing the breakdown of medieval society. His work falls into three periods, each signalized chiefly by one principal work: first, the French period, represented by a poem of great length upon the vices and the virtues entitled *Miroir de l'Omme* (The Mirror of Man), or the *Speculum Meditantis* (The Mirror of the Sage); second, a Latin period, when, under the guise of a dream allegory written in Latin, entitled *Vox Clamantis* (The Voice of the Crier), the poet depicts contemporary English society, contrasts it with the past, and brands it as inferior; and the third, the English period, in which the poet definitely abandons his protest against the degeneracy of the age and returns once more to the pleasure of medieval story-telling, this time about love; hence the title—*Confessio Amantis* (The Lover's Confession), under cover of which he charts in a poem of many thousand lines the entire medieval philosophy of life, illustrated profusely by examples. Thus Gower, though brought into contact with the facts of life, turned his back on them in favor of the old system with its beautiful yet lifeless symbolisms. It is strange to observe also that whoever made that fierce protest against contemporary misery known as *The Vision of Piers Plowman* invented no new literary form, but told his story under the guise of an allegorical medieval dream-vision. The Renaissance, which was to change the emphasis of literature from the objective to the subjective, from the universal to the particular, from the event to the cause, though it started in Italy in the fourteenth century, did not reach England until the sixteenth century, partly because of the exhausting effect upon England of the Hundred Years' War and of the Wars of the Roses.

IV. Chaucer and the Canterbury Tales

Yet even in the fourteenth century there lived a man who combined in himself the practical politician and the poet; who saw life as it was, and who, over two hundred years before Shakespeare, put into his work the doctrine expressed in Hamlet's speech to the players, for "he held the mirror up to nature, and showed the very age and body of the time his form and pressure." This man took the medieval narrative, filled it with life and characterization, and made it eternally interesting, beautiful, humorous, pathetic, and true. By his manner of fusing his observations of life with appropriate literary form, Chaucer, although he thoroughly appreciated his own time, deserves to be recognized as the originator of modern narrative poetry. His life made him at home with all classes of medieval society, and his thoughts ran across social strata and not along them. He was equally at home at the court of the king, on a diplomatic expedition for him to the Continent, or in any one of the political offices which he held during a long lifetime. But whatever he did, Chaucer observed men and gathered material for his poetry. From his diplomatic missions to France and Italy he became acquainted with the Renaissance, and brought back with him in manuscript the very best of its productions. The amazing fact is that Chaucer was not content to be either a medieval story-teller or an imitator of the new literary styles introduced by the Renaissance. He was influenced greatly both by the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, but in his last and greatest work he was influenced most by his observation of contemporary life. To its portrayal in *The Canterbury Tales* Chaucer subordinated his medieval literary heritage, and commenced the development of modern narrative poetry by the very determination which he manifests in every page to mingle types and alter hitherto accepted literary canons in order to share with his audience the picture of life as he saw it.

Chaucer looked deeply, tenderly, smilingly on life, and his characters are stirred by the ideas which have always stirred the English. Beowulf and Gawain would recognize Chaucer's Knight as actuated by their ideals:

> And though that he were worthy, he was wys,
> And of his port[1] as meeke as is a mayde.
> He nevere yet no vileynye ne sayde
> In al his lyf unto no maner wight.
> He was a verray parfit, gentil knyght.

Especially would they have sympathized with the comment upon life of the aged Egeus in *The Knight's Tale:*

> This world ys but a thurghfare ful of wo,
> And we been pilgrymes passynge to and fro;
> Death is an ende of every worldly sore,

though, of course, neither they nor Chaucer had any distaste for living, but felt intensely the delight of the struggle to which man is subjected here. If any one passage in Chaucer more than another shows his attitude toward life it is the reflection of the Wife of Bath upon her long and varied career—a reflection, by the way, of which Mr. Samuel Pepys would especially have approved:

> But, lord Christ! whan that it remembreth me
> Up-on my youthe, and on my iolitee,[2]
> It tikleth me about myn herte rote.[3]
> Unto this day it dooth myn herte bote[4]
> That I have had my world as in my time.

That at least could not be taken away from her. Life had been fascinating and had held for her the infinite zest of a struggle in which no quarter is given. And the struggle is still amazingly mysterious, alluring, and worth while, as English literature testifies throughout every manifestation of its history.

V. Modern Imitations

Ever since the close of the Middle Ages English poets have attempted to recapture the spirit of its narrative poetry, especially in the field of romance. Of course they have not been concerned with a meticulous re-creation of the ideals of chivalry, but rather with the supposed attitude toward life which actuated the chivalric age. From the time of Chaucer, who lived a century before Malory, romances have been written frequently; many have been successful narratives, and some few have attained surpassing poetic beauty. *The Knight's Tale*, *The*

[1] port, demeanor. [2] iolitee, good times. [3] rote, root. [4] bote, solace.

Squire's Tale, both by Chaucer, and the *Faerie Queene* by Spenser are outstanding examples previous to the nineteenth century. During the late eighteenth century an interest in medieval narrative poetry, especially in ballads and romances, was aroused by the recovery of the Norse Sagas, and of much medieval English poetry in Percy's *Reliques*, by the recognition of its beauty, and consequently of the beauty of English and Celtic folklore. Accordingly, when the Romantic Movement developed in the nineteenth century, many imitations of medieval narrative were attempted. The place of Scott in this development is hard to define. His longer poems are unquestionably superb narrative, but it is difficult to determine whether they are conscious imitations of medieval narrative poetry, or outpourings of Scottish romance with no idea of imitation. Whether they belong with the former type or with that of modern narrative poetry, it is certain that Scott popularized the long narrative poem as Cowper and Southey had not been able to do, and it is not an exaggeration to say that today Scott's longer narrative poems are read more than those of any Englishman, except perhaps Coleridge and Masefield. Scott certainly did more than anyone else at the beginning of the nineteenth century to show the possibilities of the long narrative poem, and while most of his narrative poetry has as its chief interest Scottish lore in times subsequent to the medieval age, yet there is no question but that it made many poets see in medieval narrative a type of poetry to be imitated. Most successful of the early nineteenth-century poets in such adaptation or imitation is Coleridge in the unfinished *Christabel* and Keats in "The Eve of St. Agnes." Here, as in all modern imitations of medieval narrative, especially of medieval romance, the subjective attitude of the poet rather than the ideals of chivalry dominates his creations. The poems recall medieval romance chiefly in their settings and figures, but not in the treatment given by the poet to his plot and characterization. In the middle of the nineteenth century Tennyson, the poet laureate of Victorian England, consciously used the Arthurian romances in the *Idylls of the King* as a medium for expressing the moral code of his day. Spiritually beautiful though they are in thought and expression, they do not recreate the spirit of medieval romance. At the end of the century, Swinburne in *Tristram in Lyonesse*, William Morris in parts of *The Earthly Paradise*, and Rossetti in his short narratives come nearest to recapturing the medieval atmosphere. Rossetti and Swinburne fuse the medieval atmosphere with a vibrant passion for the beauty and imaginative mystery of life, while Morris delights in the opportunity of weaving wonderful storied tapestries from medieval narrative, for he did not confine himself to the romance but used the folk tale as well.

It is not rash to state from what we know of the Celtic and Anglo-Saxon characteristics and ideas which have persisted throughout English literature that the love of some of them can be satisfied best by imitations of medieval romance. True it is that this field is not so broad as that occupied by modern narrative poetry, but it is a field which is especially dear to the English, for it combines as they do, both sentiment and practicality. Nowhere is this combination better revealed than at the end of Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*. "Yet some say in many parts of England that King Arthur is not dead, but had by the will of our Lord Jesu into another place; and men say that he shall come again, and he shall win the holy cross. I will not say it shall be so, but rather I will say, here in this world he changed his life. But many men say that there is written upon his tomb this verse: Hic Jacet Arthurus, Rex quondam, Rexque futurus (Here lies Arthur, once King, and King again to be)."

CHAPTER II

SELECTIONS

SIR GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT

Note

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, the most famous medieval romance written in English, was composed in the northwest of England about 1375 by an unknown poet of considerable literary power. The poem is not a mere adaptation of a French original. The poet came from that part of England which Wordsworth and Coleridge were later to immortalize, and he, too, loved nature for its mysterious beauty. The natural descriptions of the seasons and of hunting are vivid, brilliant, and lifelike, while the poet knew English and Celtic folklore well enough to make the element of the supernatural live again, as it did in the Anglo-Saxon and the Celtic sagas. The Green Knight appears superficially as a cultured product of chivalry, but his test, his ax, and his chapel all remind us of primitive days when superhuman monsters inhabited the earth and lurked in caves or burial-mounds. The green chapel is probably either an old Celtic fairy-ring, or the funeral-mound of an Anglo-Saxon hero. In addition, the characters of the poem are more real and vital than those of conventional French metrical romances—as if the poet had fused the French chivalric traditions with the Anglo-Saxon and Celtic ideals of life. Even the metrical form of the poem shows a similar fusion, for there are both Anglo-Saxon alliteration and the half line, with the French rime-scheme and meter. The following stanza commences the poem:

Siþen[1] þe sege & þe assaut watȝ[2] sesed at Troye,
þe borȝ brittened & brent to brondeȝ & askeȝ,
þe tulk þat þe tra*m*mes of tresou*n* *per* wroȝt,
Watȝ tried for his tricherie, þe trewest on erthe;
Hit watȝ Ennias þe athel, & his high*e* kynde,
þat siþen depreced pr*ou*inces,[3] & patrou*n*es bicome
Welneȝe of al þe wele i*n* þe west iles,
Fro riche Romulus to Rome ricchis hy*m* swyþe,
W*ith* gret bobbau*n*ce þat burȝe he biges vpon fyrst,
& neuenes hit his aune nome, as hit now hat;
Ticius (turnes) to Tuskan, & teldes bigy*n*nes;
Langaberde i*n* Lu*m*bardie lyftes vp homes;
& fer ou*er* þe French flod Felix Brut*us*
On mony bonkkes ful brode Bretayn he setteȝ, wyth wy*n*ne;
Where werre, & wrake, & wonder,
Bi syþeȝ hatȝ wont *per*-i*n*ne,
& oft boþe blysse & blu*n*der
Ful skete hatȝ skyfted sy*n*ne.

1. *þ* is the Anglo-Saxon *th*. 2. *ȝ* is the Anglo-Saxon *g*, used for *y*, *gh*, and final *z*. Its use here as final *s* is peculiar. 3. *u* was written for both *u* and *v* in Middle English.

The translation given here is that of Miss Jessie L. Weston, who has succeeded admirably in preserving in prose the poetical characteristics of the original poem.

I

After the siege and the assault of Troy, when that burg was destroyed and burned to ashes, and the traitor tried for his treason, the noble Aeneas and his kin sailed forth to become princes and patrons of well-nigh all the Western Isles. Thus Romulus built Rome, and gave to the city his own name, which it bears even to this day; and Ticius turned him to Tuscany; and Langobard raised him up dwellings in Lombardy; and Felix Brutus sailed far over the French flood, and founded the kingdom of Britain, wherein have been war and waste and wonder, and bliss and bale, oftimes since.

And in that kingdom of Britain have been wrought more gallant deeds than in any other; but of all British kings Arthur was the most valiant, as I have heard tell; therefore will I set forth a wondrous adventure that fell out in his time. And if ye will listen to me but for a little while, I will tell it even as it stands in story stiff and strong, fixed in the letter, as it hath long been known in the land.

King Arthur lay at Camelot upon a Christmas-tide, with many a gallant

2. **burg**, town, fortress. 3. **traitor.** In certain medieval versions of the Troy story Antenor and Aeneas betray the town to the Greeks on the promise of safety for themselves. Strangely enough this does not seem to have damaged the reputation of Aeneas with medieval romance writers, who place the blame upon Antenor. 4. **Aeneas.** The tradition of Rome during the Middle Ages was so powerful that not only did the Holy Roman Empire come into being as the spiritual and temporal heir of ancient Rome, but the chief noble families of every European country which was influenced by the Roman tradition sought to trace their ancestry either to Rome or to Greece as far back as the Trojan War. The British, through the Normans, favored the Trojans rather than the Romans, and traced their royal line back to a certain Brutus descended from Priam through the line of Aeneas. Brutus came from Italy to Britain and brought civilization to the country. This pedigree satisfied the medieval English in their search for connection with the myths and history of classical antiquity. 15. **bale**, calamity. 23. **I will tell it.** Notice that the oral tradition was being written down, and that the medieval poet delighted in preserving the ancient story. 26. **Camelot**, his mythical fortress. Some place it in Winchester and others near the border of Wales.

lord and lovely lady, and all the noble brotherhood of the Round Table. There they held rich revels with gay talk and jest; one while they would ride forth to just and tourney, and again back to the court to make carols; for there was the feast holden fifteen days with all the mirth that men could devise, song and glee, glorious to hear, in the day-time, and dancing at night. Halls and chambers were crowded with noble guests, the bravest of knights and the loveliest of ladies, and Arthur himself was the comeliest king that ever held a court. For all this fair folk were in their youth, the fairest and most fortunate under heaven, and the King himself of such fame that it were hard now to name so valiant a hero.

Now the New Year had but newly come in, and on that day a double portion was served on the high table to all the noble guests, and thither came the King with all his knights, when the service in the chapel had been sung to an end. And they greeted each other for the New Year, and gave rich gifts, the one to the other (and they that received them were not wroth, that may ye well believe!); and the maidens laughed and made mirth till it was time to get them to meat. Then they washed and sat them down to the feasting in fitting rank and order; and Guinevere the queen, gayly clad, sat on the high dais. Silken was her seat, with a fair canopy over her head, of rich tapestries of Tars, embroidered, and studded with costly gems; fair she was to look upon, with her shining gray eyes; a fairer woman might no man boast himself of having seen.

But Arthur would not eat till all were served, so full of joy and gladness was he, even as a child; he liked not either to lie long, or to sit long at meat, so worked upon him his young blood and his wild brain. And another custom he had also, that came of his nobility, that he would never eat upon an high day till he had been advised of some knightly deed, or some strange and marvelous tale, of his ancestors, or of arms, or of other ventures; or till some stranger knight should seek of him leave to just with one of the Round Table, that they might set their lives in jeopardy, one against another, as fortune might favor them. Such was the King's custom when he sat in hall at each high feast with his noble knights; therefore on that New Year tide, he abode, fair of face, on the throne, and made much mirth withal.

Thus the King sat before the high tables, and spake of many things; and there good Sir Gawain was seated by Guinevere the queen, and on her other side sat Agravain, *à la dure main;* both were the King's sister's sons and full gallant knights. And at the end of the table was Bishop Bawdewyn, and Ywain, King Urien's son, sat at the other side alone. These were worthily served on the dais, and at the lower tables sat many valiant knights. Then they bare the first course with the blast of trumpets and waving of banners, with the sound of drums and pipes, of song and lute, that many a heart was uplifted at the melody. Many were the dainties, and rare the meats; so great was the plenty they might scarce find room on the board to set on the dishes. Each helped himself as he liked best, and to each two were twelve dishes, with great plenty of beer and wine.

Now I will say no more of the service but that ye may know there was no lack, for there drew near a venture that the folk might well have left their labor to gaze upon. As the sound of the music ceased, and the first course had been fitly served, there came in at the hall door one terrible to behold, of stature greater than any on earth; from neck to loin so strong and thickly made, and with limbs so long and so great that he seemed even as a giant. And yet he was but a man, only the mightiest that might mount a steed; broad of chest and

6. **carol**, a round dance accompanied by a song. 36. **dais**, a raised platform at one end of a medieval great hall, upon which sat and dined the lord and his immediate family. 38. **Tars**, Tartary. The Crusades brought Europe in touch with Eastern art and culture.

66. **Sir Gawain**, the nephew of King Arthur, and the embodiment both of knightly courtesy and chastity. 68. **à la dure main**, with mighty hand, i.e., a hard hitter. 72. **Ywain**, the knight who incarnated faithfulness in love.

shoulders and slender of waist, and all his features of like fashion; but men marveled much at his color, for he rode even as a knight, yet was green all over.

For he was clad all in green, with a straight coat, and a mantle above; all decked and lined with fur was the cloth and the hood that was thrown back from his locks and lay on his shoulders. Hose had he of the same green, and spurs of bright gold with silken fastenings richly worked; and all his vesture was verily green. Around his waist and his saddle were bands with fair stones set upon silken work; 'twere too long to tell of all the trifles that were embroidered thereon—birds and insects in gay gauds of green and gold. All the trappings of his steed were of metal of like enamel, even the stirrups that he stood in stained of the same, and stirrups and saddlebow alike gleamed and shone with green stones. Even the steed on which he rode was of the same hue, a green horse, great and strong, and hard to hold, with broidered bridle, meet for the rider.

The knight was thus gayly dressed in green, his hair falling around his shoulders; on his breast hung a beard, as thick and green as a bush, and the beard and the hair of his head were clipped all round above his elbows. The lower part of his sleeves was fastened with clasps in the same wise as a king's mantle. The horse's mane was crisp and plaited with many a knot folded in with gold thread about the fair green, here a twist of the hair, here another of gold. The tail was twined in like manner, and both were bound about with a band of bright green set with many a precious stone; then they were tied aloft in a cunning knot, whereon rang many bells of burnished gold. Such a steed might no other ride, nor had such ever been looked upon in that hall ere that time; and all who saw that knight spake and said that a man might scarce abide his stroke.

The knight bore no helm nor hauberk, neither gorget nor breastplate, neither shaft nor buckler to smite nor to shield, but in one hand he had a holly-bough, that is greenest when the groves are bare, and in his other an ax, huge and uncomely, a cruel weapon in fashion, if one would picture it. The head was an ell-yard long, the metal all of green steel and gold, the blade burnished bright, with a broad edge, as well shapen to shear as a sharp razor. The steel was set into a strong staff, all bound round with iron, even to the end, and engraved with green in cunning work. A lace was twined about it, that looped at the head, and all adown the handle it was clasped with tassels on buttons of bright green richly broidered.

The knight rideth through the entrance of the hall, driving straight to the high dais, and greeted no man, but looked ever upward; and the first words he spake were, "Where is the ruler of this folk? I would gladly look upon that hero, and have speech with him." He cast his eyes on the knights, and mustered them up and down, striving ever to see who of them was of most renown.

Then was there great gazing to behold that chief, for each man marveled what it might mean that a knight and his steed should have even such a hue as the green grass; and that seemed even greener than green enamel on bright gold. All looked on him as he stood, and drew near unto him, wondering greatly what he might be; for many marvels had they seen, but none such as this, and phantasm and faërie did the folk deem it. Therefore were the gallant knights slow to answer, and gazed astounded, and sat stone still in a deep silence through that goodly hall, as if a slumber were fallen upon them. I deem it was not all for doubt, but somewhat for courtesy that they might give ear unto his errand.

Then Arthur beheld this adventurer before his high dais, and knightly he greeted him, for fearful was he never. "Sir," he said, "thou art welcome to

18. **gauds**, adornments. 37. **crisp**, curly. 51. **hauberk**, coat-of-mail. 52. **gorget**, neckpiece to protect the throat.

59. **ell-yard**, between twenty-seven and forty-eight inches; a medieval measure for cloth. 66. **lace**, a cord, usually an ornamental one, by which weapons were fastened either to the knight or to his saddle. 77. **mustered**, sized up, inspected.

this place—lord of this hall am I, and men call me Arthur. Light thee down, and tarry a while, and what thy will is, that shall we learn after."

"Nay," quoth the stranger, "so help me He that sitteth on high, 'twas not mine errand to tarry any while in this dwelling; but the praise of this thy folk and thy city is lifted up on high, and thy warriors are holden for the best and the most valiant of those who ride mail-clad to the fight. The wisest and the worthiest of this world are they, and well proved in all knightly sports. And here, as I have heard tell, is fairest courtesy; therefore have I come hither as at this time. Ye may be sure by the branch that I bear here that I come in peace, seeking no strife. For had I willed to journey in warlike guise I have at home both hauberk and helm, shield and shining spear, and other weapons to mine hand, but since I seek no war, my raiment is that of peace. But if thou be as bold as all men tell, thou wilt freely grant me the boon I ask."

And Arthur answered, "Sir Knight, if thou cravest battle here, thou shalt not fail for lack of a foe."

And the knight answered, "Nay, I ask no fight; in faith here on the benches are but beardless children; were I clad in armor on my steed, there is no man here might match me. Therefore I ask in this court but a Christmas jest, for that it is Yule-tide, and New Year, and there are here many fain for sport. If anyone in this hall holds himself so hardy, so bold both of blood and brain, as to dare strike me one stroke for another, I will give him as a gift this ax, which is heavy enough, in sooth, to handle as he may list, and I will abide the first blow, unarmed as I sit. If any knight be so bold as to prove my words, let him come swiftly to me here, and take this weapon; I quit claim to it; he may keep it as his own, and I will abide his stroke, firm on the floor. Then shalt thou give me the right to deal him another—the respite of a year and a day shall he have. Now haste, and let see whether any here dare say aught."

Now if the knights had been astounded at the first, yet stiller were they all, high and low, when they had heard his words. The knight on his steed straightened himself in the saddle, and rolled his eyes fiercely round the hall; red they gleamed under his green and bushy brows. He frowned and twisted his beard, waiting to see who should rise, and when none answered he cried aloud in mockery: "What! is this Arthur's hall, and these the knights whose renown hath run through many realms? Where are now your pride and your conquests, your wrath, and anger, and mighty words? Now are the praise and the renown of the Round Table overthrown by one man's speech, since all keep silence for dread ere ever they have seen a blow!"

With that he laughed so loudly that the blood rushed to the King's fair face for very shame; he waxed wroth, as did all his knights, and sprang to his feet, and drew near to the stranger and said: "Now by heaven, foolish is thy asking, and thy folly shall find its fitting answer. I know no man aghast at thy great words. Give me here thine ax and I shall grant thee the boon thou hast asked." Lightly he sprang to him and caught at his hand, and the knight, fierce of aspect, lighted down from his charger.

Then Arthur took the ax and gripped the haft, and swung it round, ready to strike. And the knight stood before him, taller by the head than any in the hall; he stood, and stroked his beard, and drew down his coat, no more dismayed for the King's threats than if one had brought him a drink of wine.

Then Gawain, who sat by the Queen, leaned forward to the King and spake: "I beseech ye, my lord, let this venture be mine. Would ye but bid me rise from this seat, and stand by your side, so that my liege Lady thought it not ill, then would I come to your counsel before this goodly court; for I think it not seemly when such challenges be

37. **Yule-tide.** Originally for the Anglo-Saxons this term meant mid-winter, but later it became associated with Christmas.

made in your hall that ye yourself should undertake it. While there are many bold knights who sit beside ye, none are there, methinks, of readier will under heaven, or more valiant in open field. I am the weakest, I wot, and the feeblest of wit, and it will be the less loss of my life if ye seek sooth. For save that ye are mine uncle, naught is there in me to praise, no virtue is there in my body save your blood, and since this challenge is such folly that it beseems ye not to take it, and I have asked it from ye first, let it fall to me, and if I bear myself ungallantly, then let all this court blame me."

Then they all spake with one voice that the King should leave this venture and grant it to Gawain.

Then Arthur commanded the knight to rise, and he rose up quickly and knelt down before the King, and caught hold of the weapon; and the King loosed his hold of it, and lifted up his hand, and gave him his blessing, and bade him be strong both of heart and hand. "Keep thee well, nephew," quoth Arthur, "that thou give him but the one blow, and if thou redest him rightly, I trow thou shalt well abide the stroke he may give thee after."

Gawain stepped to the stranger, ax in hand, and he, never fearing, awaited his coming. Then the Green Knight spake to Sir Gawain, "Make we our covenant ere we go further. First, I ask thee, knight, what is thy name? Tell me truly, that I may know thee."

"In faith," quoth the good knight, "Gawain am I, who give thee this buffet, let what may come of it; and at this time twelvemonth will I take another at thine hand with whatsoever weapon thou wilt, and none other."

Then the other answered again, "Sir Gawain, so may I thrive as I am fain to take this buffet at thine hand"; and he quoth further: "Sir Gawain, it liketh me well that I shall take at thy fist that which I have asked here, and thou hast readily and truly rehearsed all the covenant that I asked of the King, save that thou shalt swear me, by thy troth, to seek me thyself wherever thou hopest that I may be found, and win thee such reward as thou dealest me today, before this folk."

"Where shall I seek thee?" quoth Gawain. "Where is thy place? By Him that made me, I wot never where thou dwellest, nor know I thee, knight, thy court, nor thy name. But teach me truly all that pertaineth thereto, and tell me thy name, and I shall use all my wit to win my way thither, and that I swear thee for sooth, and by my sure troth."

"That is enough in the New Year—it needs no more"—quoth the Green Knight to the gallant Gawain, "if I tell thee truly when I have taken the blow, and thou hast smitten me. Then will I teach thee of my house and home, and mine own name; then mayest thou ask thy road and keep covenant. And if I waste no words, then farest thou the better, for thou canst dwell in thy land, and seek no further. But take now thy toll, and let see how thou strikest."

"Gladly will I," quoth Gawain, handling his ax.

Then the Green Knight swiftly made him ready, he bowed down his head, and laid his long locks on the crown that his bare neck might be seen. Gawain gripped his ax and raised it on high, the left foot he set forward on the floor, and let the blow fall lightly on the bare neck. The sharp edge of the blade sundered the bones, smote through the neck, and clave it in two, so that the edge of the steel bit on the ground, and the fair head fell to the earth that many struck it with their feet as it rolled forth. The blood spurted forth, and glistened on the green raiment, but the knight neither faltered nor fell; he started forward with outstretched hand, and caught the head, and lifted it up; then he turned to his steed, and took hold of the bridle, set his foot in the stirrup, and mounted. His head he held by the hair, in his hand. Then he seated himself in his saddle as if naught ailed him, and he were not headless. He turned his steed about, the grim

8. **sooth**, the truth. 29. **redest**, counselest—ironical.

corpse bleeding freely the while, and they who looked upon him doubted them much for the covenant.

For he held up the head in his hand, and turned the face toward them that sat on the high dais, and it lifted up the eyelids and looked upon them and spake as ye shall hear. "Look, Gawain, that thou art ready to go as thou hast promised, and seek leally till thou find me, even as thou hast sworn in this hall in the hearing of these knights. Come thou, I charge thee, to the Green Chapel; such a stroke as thou hast dealt thou hast deserved, and it shall be promptly paid thee on New Year's morn. Many men know me as the Knight of the Green Chapel, and if thou askest, thou shalt not fail to find me. Therefore it behooves thee to come, or to yield thee as recreant."

With that he turned his bridle, and galloped out at the hall door, his head in his hands, so that the sparks flew from beneath his horse's hoofs. Whither he went none knew, no more than they wist whence he had come; and the King and Gawain they gazed and laughed, for in sooth this had proved a greater marvel than any they had known aforetime.

Though Arthur, the king, was astonished at his heart, yet he let no sign of it be seen, but spake in courteous wise to the fair Queen: "Dear lady, be not dismayed; such craft is well suited to Christmas-tide when we seek jesting, laughter, and song, and fair carols of knights and ladies. But now I may well get me to meat, for I have seen a marvel I may not forget." Then he looked on Sir Gawain, and said gayly, "Now, fair nephew, hang up thine ax, since it has hewn enough," and they hung it on the dossal above the dais, where all men might look on it for a marvel, and by its true token tell of the wonder. Then the twain sat them down together, the King and the good knight, and men served them with a double portion, as was the share of the noblest, with all manner of meat and of minstrelsy. And they spent that day in gladness, but Sir Gawain must well bethink him of the heavy venture to which he had set his hand.

10. **leally**, loyally. 45. **dossal**, a cloth or tapestry covering hung over the back of a chair or a dais.

II

This beginning of adventures had Arthur at the New Year; for he yearned to hear gallant tales, though his words were few when he sat at the feast. But now had they stern work on hand. Gawain was glad to begin the jest in the hall, but ye need have no marvel if the end be heavy. For though a man be merry in mind when he has well drunk, yet a year runs full swiftly, and the beginning but rarely matches the end.

For Yule was now overpast, and the year after, each season in its turn following the other. For after Christmas comes crabbed Lent, that will have fish for flesh and simpler cheer. But then the weather of the world chides with winter; the cold withdraws itself, the clouds uplift, and the rain falls in warm showers on the fair plains. Then the flowers come forth, meadows and grove are clad in green, the birds make ready to build, and sing sweetly for solace of the soft summer that follows thereafter. The blossoms bud and blow in the hedgerows rich and rank, and noble notes enough are heard in the fair woods.

After the season of summer, with the soft winds, when zephyr breathes lightly on seeds and herbs, joyous indeed is the growth that waxes thereout when the dew drips from the leaves beneath the blissful glance of the bright sun. But then comes harvest and hardens the grain, warning it to wax ripe ere the winter. The drought drives the dust on high, flying over the face of the land; the angry wind of the welkin wrestles with the sun; the leaves fall from the trees and light upon the ground, and all brown are the groves that but now were green, and ripe is the fruit that once was flower. So the year passes

95. **welkin**, sky. Compare these descriptions of the seasons with those of William Morris and Wordsworth, as well as with Browning's "Home-Thoughts, from Abroad" (page 550).

into many yesterdays, and winter comes again, as it needs no sage to tell us.

When the Michaelmas moon was come in with warnings of winter, Sir Gawain bethought him full oft of his perilous journey. Yet till All Hallows Day he lingered with Arthur, and on that day they made a great feast for the hero's sake, with much revel and richness of the Round Table. Courteous knights and comely ladies, all were in sorrow for the love of that knight, and though they spake no word of it, many were joyless for his sake.

And after meat, sadly Sir Gawain turned to his uncle, and spake of his journey, and said, "Liege lord of my life, leave from you I crave. Ye know well how the matter stands without more words; tomorrow am I bound to set forth in search of the Green Knight."

Then came together all the noblest knights, Ywain and Erec, and many another—Sir Dodinel le Sauvage, the Duke of Clarence, Lancelot and Lionel, and Lucan the Good, Sir Bors and Bedivere, valiant knights both, and many another hero, with Sir Mador de la Porte; and they all drew near, heavy at heart, to take counsel with Sir Gawain. Much sorrow and weeping was there in the hall to think that so worthy a knight as Gawain should wend his way to seek a deadly blow, and should no more wield his sword in fight. But the knight made ever good cheer, and said, "Nay, wherefore should I shrink? What may a man do but prove his fate?"

He dwelt there all that day, and on the morn he arose and asked betimes for his armor; and they brought it unto him on this wise: first, a rich carpet was stretched on the floor, and brightly did the gold gear glitter upon it; then the knight stepped on to it, and handled the steel; clad he was in a doublet of silk, with a close hood, lined fairly throughout. Then they set the steel shoes upon his feet, and wrapped his legs with greaves, with polished knee-caps, fastened with knots of gold. Then they cased his thighs in cuisses closed with thongs, and brought him the byrnie of bright steel rings sewed upon a fair stuff. Well-burnished braces they set on each arm with good elbow-pieces, and gloves of mail, and all the goodly gear that should shield him in his need. And they cast over all a rich surcoat, and set the golden spurs on his heels, and girt him with a trusty sword fastened with a silken bawdrick. When he was thus clad, his harness was costly, for the least loop or latchet gleamed with gold. So armed as he was he hearkened Mass and made his offering at the high altar. Then he came to the King, and the knights of his court, and courteously took leave of lords and ladies, and they kissed him, and commended him to Christ.

With that was Gringalet ready, girt with a saddle that gleamed gayly with many golden fringes, enriched and decked anew for the venture. The bridle was all barred about with bright gold buttons, and all the covertures and trappings of the steed, the crupper and the rich skirts, accorded with the saddle; spread fair with the rich red gold that glittered and gleamed in the rays of the sun.

Then the knight called for his helmet, which was well lined throughout, and set it high on his head, and hasped it behind. He wore a light kerchief over the ventail, that was broidered and studded with fair gems on a broad silken ribbon, with birds of gay color, and many a turtle and true-lover's knot interlaced thickly, even as many a maiden had wrought diligently for seven winters long. But the circlet

3. **Michaelmas moon**, the feast of the archangel Michael, on September 29. 6. **All Hallows Day**, All Saints' Day, November 1. 39. **prove his fate.** Beowulf and Sir Gawain first utter this basic belief of the English. Trace its development in subsequent English literature, especially in lyric poetry and biography.

52. **greaves**, armor which incased the leg below the knee. 54. **cuisses**, armor which protected the leg above the knee to the thigh; usually it protected only the front. 55. **byrnie**, a coat of chain mail. 57. **braces**, armor for the arms, jointed at the elbow by the elbow pieces. 64. **bawdrick**, a belt which runs over one shoulder and under the other. It was used to hang a sword or horn upon. 80. **crupper**, that piece of harness which passes under a horse's tail. 89. **ventail**, that part of the helmet which protected the face, and which could be raised when the knight was not justing or in battle.

which crowned his helmet was yet more precious, being adorned with a device in diamonds. Then they brought him his shield, which was of bright red, with the pentangle painted thereon in gleaming gold. And why that noble prince bare the pentangle I am minded to tell you, though my tale tarry thereby. It is a sign that Solomon set erewhile, as betokening truth; for it is a figure with five points and each line overlaps the other, and nowhere hath it beginning or end, so that in English it is called "the endless knot." And therefore was it well suiting to this knight and to his arms, since Gawain was faithful in five and fivefold, for pure was he as gold, void of all villainy, and endowed with all virtues. Therefore he bare the pentangle on shield and surcoat as truest of heroes and gentlest of knights.

For first he was faultless in his five senses; and his five fingers never failed him; and all his trust upon earth was in the five wounds that Christ bare on the cross, as the Creed tells. And wherever this knight found himself in stress of battle he deemed well that he drew his strength from the five joys which the Queen of Heaven had of her Child. And for this cause did he bear an image of Our Lady on the one half of his shield, that whenever he looked upon it he might not lack for aid. And the fifth five that the hero used were frankness and fellowship, above all, purity and courtesy that never failed him, and compassion that surpasses all; and in these five virtues was that hero wrapped and clothed. And all these, fivefold, were linked one in the other, so that they had no end, and were fixed on five points that never failed, neither at any side were they joined or sundered, nor could ye find beginning or end. And therefore on his shield was the knot shapen, red-gold upon red, which is the pure pentangle. Now was Sir Gawain ready, and he took his lance in hand, and bade them all farewell—he deemed it had been forever.

Then he smote the steed with his spurs, and sprang on his way, so that sparks flew from the stones after him. All that saw him were grieved at heart, and said one to the other: "By Christ, 'tis great pity that one of such noble life should be lost! I' faith, 'twere not easy to find his equal upon earth. The King had done better to have wrought more warily. Yonder knight should have been made a duke; a gallant leader of men is he, and such a fate had beseemed him better than to be hewn in pieces at the will of an elfish man, for mere pride. Who ever knew a king to take such counsel as to risk his knights on a Christmas jest?" Many were the tears that flowed from their eyes when that goodly knight rode from the hall. He made no delaying, but went his way swiftly, and rode many a wild road, as I heard say in the book.

So rode Sir Gawain through the realm of Logres, on an errand that he held for no jest. Often he lay companionless at night, and must lack the fare that he liked. No comrade had he save his steed, and none save God with whom to take counsel. At length he drew nigh to North Wales, and left the isles of Anglesey on his left hand, crossing over the fords by the foreland over at Holyhead, till he came into the wilderness of Wirral, where but few dwell who love God and man of true heart. And ever he asked, as he fared, of all whom he met, if they had heard any tidings of a Green Knight in the country thereabout, or of a Green Chapel. And all answered him, Nay, never in their lives had they seen any man of such a hue. And the knight wended his way by many a strange road and many a rugged path, and the

5. **pentangle**, a magic symbol in the form of a five-pointed star. 23. **faultless**, etc., an example of medieval codification. 30. **five joys**, the Annunciation, the Visitation to St. Elizabeth, the Nativity, the Presentation in the Temple, and the Finding in the Temple.

66. **elfish**, other-world, supernatural; like Grendel and the giants which are described in *Beowulf*. 76. **Logres**, the medieval name for England, so-called from the mythical King Logris, or Locrine. 86. **Wirral**, probably in Cheshire. It should be noted that Gawain's journey took him through the Celtic country of North Wales with its outlying islands, and that from thence he started north toward the Anglian country of Northumberland, where *Beowulf* was probably set down in writing, and where lay the lake district in which Wordsworth was later to live.

fashion of his countenance changed full often ere he saw the Green Chapel.

Many a cliff did he climb in that unknown land, where afar from his friends he rode as a stranger. Never did he come to a stream or a ford but he found a foe before him, and that one so marvelous, so foul and fell, that it behooved him to fight. So many wonders did that knight behold that it were too long to tell the tenth part of them. Sometimes he fought with dragons and wolves; sometimes with wild men that dwelt in the rocks; another while with bulls, and bears, and wild boars, or with giants of the high moorland that drew near to him. Had he not been a doughty knight, enduring, and of well-proved valor, and a servant of God, doubtless he had been slain, for he was oft in danger of death. Yet he cared not so much for the strife; what he deemed worse was when the cold, clear water was shed from the clouds, and froze ere it fell on the fallow ground. More nights than enough he slept in his harness on the bare rocks, near slain with the sleet, while the stream leaped bubbling from the crest of the hills, and hung in hard icicles over his head.

Thus in peril and pain, and many a hardship, the knight rode alone till Christmas Eve, and in that tide he made his prayer to the Blessed Virgin that she would guide his steps and lead him to some dwelling. On that morning he rode by a hill, and came into a thick forest, wild and drear; on each side were high hills, and thick woods below them of great hoar oaks, a hundred together, of hazel and hawthorn with their trailing boughs intertwined, and rough ragged moss spreading everywhere. On the bare twigs the birds chirped piteously, for pain of the cold. The knight upon Gringalet rode lonely beneath them, through marsh and mire, much troubled at heart lest he should fail to see the service of the Lord, who on that selfsame night was born of a maiden for the cure of our grief; and therefore he said, sighing, "I beseech thee, Lord, and Mary, thy gentle Mother, for some shelter where I may hear Mass, and thy matins at morn. This I ask meekly, and thereto I pray my Paternoster, Ave, and Credo." Thus he rode praying, and lamenting his misdeeds, and he crossed himself, and said, "May the Cross of Christ speed me."

Now that knight had crossed himself but thrice ere he was aware in the wood of a dwelling within a moat, above a lawn, on a mound surrounded by many mighty trees that stood round the moat. 'Twas the fairest castle that ever a knight owned; built in a meadow with a park all about it, and a spiked palisade, closely driven, that inclosed the trees for more than two miles. The knight was ware of the hold from the side, as it shone through the oaks. Then he lifted off his helmet, and thanked Christ and Saint Julian that they had courteously granted his prayer, and hearkened to his cry. "Now," quoth the knight, "I beseech ye, grant me fair hostel." Then he pricked Gringalet with his golden spurs, and rode gayly toward the great gate, and came swiftly to the bridge end.

The bridge was drawn up and the gates close shut; the walls were strong and thick, so that they might fear no tempest. The knight on his charger abode on the bank of the deep double ditch that surrounded the castle. The walls were set deep in the water, and rose aloft to a wondrous height; they were of hard hewn stone up to the corbels, which were adorned beneath the battlements with fair carvings, and turrets set in between with many a loophole; a better barbican Sir Gawain had never looked upon. And within he beheld the high hall, with its tower and many windows with carven cornices, and chalk-white chimneys on the turreted roofs that shone fair in the sun. And everywhere, thickly scattered on the castle battlements, were pinnacles, so many that it seemed as if it were all wrought out of paper, so white was it.

57. **Paternoster**, etc., Latin prayers of the Catholic church. 72. **hold**, castle. 75. **Saint Julian**, patron saint of hospitality. 78. **hostel**, shelter accorded a guest. 91. **corbel**, a projection which protrudes from a wall to support a balcony or tower. 94. **barbican**, the outer defense of a medieval castle, especially a large tower through which entrance is gained to the outworks.

The knight on his steed deemed it fair enough, if he might come to be sheltered within it to lodge there while that the holy-day lasted. He called aloud, and soon there came a porter of kindly countenance, who stood on the wall and greeted this knight and asked his errand.

"Good sir," quoth Gawain, "wilt thou go mine errand to the high lord of the castle, and crave for me lodging?"

"Yea, by Saint Peter," quoth the porter. "In sooth I trow that ye be welcome to dwell here so long as it may like ye."

Then he went, and came again swiftly, and many folk with him to receive the knight. They let down the great drawbridge, and came forth and knelt on their knees on the cold earth to give him worthy welcome. They held wide open the great gates, and courteously he bade them rise, and rode over the bridge. Then men came to him and held his stirrup while he dismounted, and took and stabled his steed. There came down knights and squires to bring the guest with joy to the hall. When he raised his helmet, there were many to take it from his hand, fain to serve him, and they took from him sword and shield.

Sir Gawain gave good greeting to the noble and the mighty men who came to do him honor. Clad in his shining armor they led him to the hall, where a great fire burned brightly on the floor; and the lord of the household came forth from his chamber to meet the hero fitly. He spake to the knight, and said: "Ye are welcome to do here as it likes ye. All that is here is your own to have at your will and disposal."

"Gramercy!" quoth Gawain; "may Christ requite ye."

As friends that were fain each embraced the other; and Gawain looked on the knight who greeted him so kindly, and thought 'twas a bold warrior that owned that burg.

Of mighty stature he was, and of high age; broad and flowing was his beard, and of a bright hue. He was stalwart of limb, and strong in his stride, his face fiery red, and his speech free; in sooth he seemed one well fitted to be a leader of valiant men.

Then the lord led Sir Gawain to a chamber, and commanded folk to wait upon him, and at his bidding there came men enough who brought the guest to a fair bower. The bedding was noble, with curtains of pure silk wrought with gold, and wondrous coverings of fair cloth all embroidered. The curtains ran on ropes with rings of red gold, and the walls were hung with carpets of orient, and the same spread on the floor. There with mirthful speeches they took from the guest his byrnie and all his shining armor, and brought him rich robes of the choicest in its stead. They were long and flowing, and became him well, and when he was clad in them, all who looked on the hero thought that surely God had never made a fairer knight; he seemed as if he might be a prince without peer in the field where men strive in battle.

Then before the hearth-place, whereon the fire burned, they made ready a chair for Gawain, hung about with cloth and fair cushions; and there they cast around him a mantle of brown samite, richly embroidered and furred within with costly skins of ermine, with a hood of the same, and he seated himself in that rich seat, and warmed himself at the fire, and was cheered at heart. And while he sat thus, the serving men set up a table on trestles, and covered it with a fair white cloth, and set thereon salt-cellar, and napkin, and silver spoons; and the knight washed at his will, and sat him down to meat.

The folk served him courteously with many dishes seasoned of the best, a double portion. All kinds of fish were there, some baked in bread, some broiled on the embers, some sodden, some stewed and savored with spices, with all sorts of cunning devices to his taste. And often he called it a feast, when they spake gayly to him all together, and said, "Now take ye this penance, and it shall be for your amend-

55. **free**, open, frank. 61. **bower**, in medieval castles the quarters set apart for the women. 83. **samite**, brocaded silk. 99. **sodden**, boiled.

ment." Much mirth thereof did Sir Gawain make.

Then they questioned that prince courteously of whence he came; and he told them that he was of the court of Arthur, who is the rich royal king of the Round Table, and that it was Gawain himself who was within their walls, and would keep Christmas with them, as the chance had fallen out. And when the lord of the castle heard those tidings he laughed aloud for gladness, and all men in that keep were joyful that they should be in the company of him to whom belonged all fame, and valor, and courtesy, and whose honor was praised above that of all men on earth. Each said softly to his fellow: "Now shall we see courteous bearing, and the manner of speech befitting courts. What charm lieth in gentle speech shall we learn without asking, since here we have welcomed the fine father of courtesy. God has surely shown us his grace, since he sends us such a guest as Gawain! When men shall sit and sing, blithe for Christ's birth, this knight shall bring us to the knowledge of fair manners, and it may be that hearing him we may learn the cunning speech of love."

By the time the knight had risen from dinner it was near nightfall. Then chaplains took their way to the chapel, and rang loudly, even as they should, for the solemn evensong of the high feast. Thither went the lord, and the lady also, and entered with her maidens into a comely closet, and thither also went Gawain. Then the lord took him by the sleeve and led him to a seat, and called him by his name, and told him he was of all men in the world the most welcome. And Sir Gawain thanked him truly, and each kissed the other, and they sat gravely together throughout the service.

Then was the lady fain to look upon that knight; and she came forth from her closet with many fair maidens. The fairest of ladies was she in face, and figure, and coloring, fairer even than Guinevere, so the knight thought. She came through the chancel to greet the hero; another lady held her by the left hand, older than she, and seemingly of high estate, with many nobles about her. But unlike to look upon were those ladies, for if the younger were fair, the elder was yellow. Rich red were the cheeks of the one, rough and wrinkled those of the other; the kerchiefs of the one were broidered with many glistening pearls, her throat and neck bare, and whiter than the snow that lies on the hills; the neck of the other was swathed in a gorget, with a white wimple over her black chin. Her forehead was wrapped in silk with many folds, worked with knots, so that naught of her was seen save her black brows, her eyes, her nose, and her lips, and those were bleared, and ill to look upon. A worshipful lady in sooth one might call her! In figure was she short and broad, and thickly made—far fairer to behold was she whom she led by the hand.

When Gawain beheld that fair lady, who looked at him graciously, with leave of the lord he went toward them, and, bowing low, he greeted the elder, but the younger and fairer he took lightly in his arms, and kissed her courteously, and greeted her in knightly wise. Then she hailed him as friend, and he quickly prayed to be counted as her servant, if she so willed. Then they took him between them, and talking, led him to the chamber, to the hearth, and bade them bring spices, and they brought them in plenty with the good wine that was wont to be drunk at such seasons. Then the lord sprang to his feet and bade them make merry, and took off his hood, and hung it on a spear, and bade him win the worship thereof who should make most mirth that Christmas-tide. "And I shall try,

13. **keep**, the donjon, or central tower, of a medieval castle. 28. **fair manners.** Gawain's reputation for courtesy required him to be a master of the intricate language and manners of courtly love. 39. **closet**, a small private room.

54. **chancel**, that part of a church or chapel which is shut off from the congregation by gates or railings. It includes the choir and the altar. 67. **gorget**, a collar. **wimple**, a linen or silken covering which completely conceals the throat, the neck, and sometimes the chin. At present it is worn chiefly by Catholic nuns. 86. **her servant.** This phrase and the kissing were part of the conventions of courtly love.

by my faith, to fool it with the best, by the help of my friends, ere I lose my raiment." Thus with gay words the lord made trial to gladden Gawain with jests that night, till it was time to bid them light the tapers, and Sir Gawain took leave of them and gat him to rest.

In the morn when all men call to mind how Christ our Lord was born on earth to die for us, there is joy, for his sake, in all dwellings of the world; and so was there here on that day. For high feast was held, with many dainties and cunningly cooked messes. On the dais sat gallant men, clad in their best. The ancient dame sat on the high seat, with the lord of the castle beside her. Gawain and the fair lady sat together, even in the midst of the board when the feast was served; and so throughout all the hall each sat in his degree, and was served in order. There was meat, there was mirth, there was much joy, so that to tell thereof would take me too long, though peradventure I might strive to declare it. But Gawain and that fair lady had much joy of each other's company through her sweet words and courteous converse. And there was music made before each prince, trumpets and drums, and merry pipings; each man hearkened his minstrel, and they, too, hearkened theirs.

So they held high feast that day and the next, and the third day thereafter, and the joy on Saint John's Day was fair to hearken, for 'twas the last of the feast and the guests would depart in the gray of the morning. Therefore they awoke early, and drank wine, and danced fair carols, and at last, when it was late, each man took his leave to wend early on his way. Gawain would bid his host farewell, but the lord took him by the hand, and led him to his own chamber beside the hearth, and there he thanked him for the favor he had shown him in honoring his dwelling at that high season, and gladdening his castle with his fair countenance. "I wis, sir, that while I live I shall be held the worthier that Gawain has been my guest at God's own feast."

"Gramercy, sir," quoth Gawain, "in good faith, all the honor is yours; may the High King give it you, and I am but at your will to work your behest, inasmuch as I am beholden to you in great and small by rights."

Then the lord did his best to persuade the knight to tarry with him, but Gawain answered that he might in no wise do so. Then the host asked him courteously what stern behest had driven him at the holy season from the King's court, to fare all alone, ere yet the feast was ended.

"Forsooth," quoth the knight, "ye say but the truth; 'tis a high quest and a pressing that hath brought me afield, for I am summoned myself to a certain place, and I know not whither in the world I may wend to find it; so help me Christ, I would give all the kingdom of Logres an I might find it by New Year's morn. Therefore, sir, I make request of you that ye tell me truly if ye ever heard word of the Green Chapel, where it may be found, and the Green Knight that keeps it. For I am pledged by solemn compact sworn between us to meet that knight at the New Year if so I were on life; and of that same New Year it wants but little—I' faith, I would look on that hero more joyfully than on any other fair sight! Therefore, by your will, it behooves me to leave you, for I have but barely three days, and I would as fain fall dead as fail of mine errand."

Then the lord quoth, laughing: "Now must ye needs stay, for I will show you your goal, the Green Chapel, ere your term be at an end, have ye no fear! But ye can take your ease, friend, in your bed, till the fourth day, and go forth on the first of the year and come to that place at mid-morn to do as ye will. Dwell here till New Year's Day, and then rise and set forth, and ye shall be set in the way; 'tis not two miles hence."

Then was Gawain glad, and he laughed gayly. "Now I thank you for

37. **Saint John's Day**, December 27. 51. **I wis**, in truth, or I think.

76. **an**, if.

this above all else. Now my quest is achieved, I will dwell here at your will, and otherwise do as ye shall ask."

Then the lord took him, and set him beside him, and bade the ladies be fetched for their greater pleasure, though between themselves they had solace. The lord, for gladness, made merry jest, even as one who wist not what to do for joy; and he cried aloud to the knight, "Ye have promised to do the thing I bid ye; will ye hold to this behest, here, at once?"

"Yea, forsooth," said that true knight; "while I abide in your burg I am bound by your behest."

"Ye have traveled from far," said the host, "and since then ye have waked with me, ye are not well refreshed by rest and sleep, as I know. Ye shall therefore abide in your chamber, and lie at your ease tomorrow at Mass-tide, and go to meat when ye will with my wife, who shall sit with you, and comfort you with her company till I return; and I shall rise early and go forth to the chase." And Gawain agreed to all this courteously.

"Sir knight," quoth the host, "we will make a covenant. Whatsoever I win in the wood shall be yours, and whatever may fall to your share, that shall ye exchange for it. Let us swear, friend, to make this exchange, however our hap may be, for worse or for better."

"I grant ye your will," quoth Gawain the good; "if ye list so to do, it liketh me well."

"Bring hither the wine-cup; the bargain is made"—so said the lord of that castle. They laughed each one, and drank of the wine, and made merry, these lords and ladies, as it pleased them. Then with gay talk and merry jest they rose, and stood, and spoke softly, and kissed courteously, and took leave of each other. With burning torches, and many a serving-man, was each led to his couch; yet ere they gat them to bed the old lord oft repeated their covenant, for he knew well how to make sport.

7. **solace**, comfort. 9. **wist**, knew.

III

Full early, ere daylight, the folk rose up; the guests who would depart called their grooms, and they made them ready, and saddled the steeds, tightened up the girths, and trussed up their mails. The knights, all arrayed for riding, leaped up lightly, and took their bridles, and each rode his way as pleased him best.

The lord of the land was not the last. Ready for the chase, with many of his men, he ate a sop hastily when he had heard Mass, and then with blast of the bugle fared forth to the field. He and his nobles were to horse ere daylight glimmered upon the earth.

Then the huntsmen coupled their hounds, unclosed the kennel door, and called them out. They blew three blasts gayly on the bugles, the hounds bayed fiercely, and they that would go a-hunting checked and chastised them. A hundred hunters there were of the best, so I have heard tell. Then the trackers gat them to the trysting-place and uncoupled the hounds, and the forest rang again with their gay blasts.

At the first sound of the hunt the game quaked for fear, and fled, trembling, along the vale. They betook them to the heights, but the liers-in-wait turned them back with loud cries; the harts they let pass them, and the stags with their spreading antlers, for the lord had forbidden that they should be slain, but the hinds and the does they turned back, and drave down into the valleys. Then might ye see much shooting of arrows. As the deer fled under the boughs a broad whistling shaft smote and wounded each sorely, so that, wounded and bleeding, they fell dying on the banks. The hounds followed swiftly on their tracks, and

57. **trussed up their mails**, tied up their bundles. 64. **sop**, a piece of bread or cake dipped in wine or milk. It formed a light medieval breakfast much like the present continental breakfast of coffee and rolls. 69. **Then the huntsmen**, etc. Compare these descriptions of hunting with those of Morris in "Atalanta's Race" (page 277) and Scott in *The Lady of the Lake*. 86. **hart**, the male of the red deer. Today hunters spare the does and kill the harts. 89. **hind**, the female of the red deer.

hunters, blowing the horn, sped after them with ringing shouts as if the cliffs burst asunder. What game escaped those that shot was run down at the outer ring. Thus were they driven on the hills, and harassed at the waters, so well did the men know their work, and the greyhounds were so great and swift that they ran them down as fast as the hunters could slay them. Thus the lord passed the day in mirth and joyfulness, even to nightfall.

So the lord roamed the woods, and Gawain, that good knight, lay ever abed, curtained about, under the costly coverlet, while the daylight gleamed on the walls. And as he lay half slumbering, he heard a little sound at the door, and he raised his head, and caught back a corner of the curtain, and waited to see what it might be. It was the lovely lady, the lord's wife; she shut the door softly behind her, and turned toward the bed; and Gawain was shamed, and laid him down softly and made as if he slept. And she came lightly to the bedside, within the curtain, and sat herself down beside him, to wait till he wakened. The knight lay there a while, and marveled within himself what her coming might betoken; and he said to himself, "'Twere more seemly if I asked her what hath brought her hither." Then he made feint to waken, and turned toward her, and opened his eyes as one astonished, and crossed himself; and she looked on him laughing, with her cheeks red and white, lovely to behold, and small, smiling lips.

"Good-morrow, Sir Gawain," said that fair lady; "ye are but a careless sleeper, since one can enter thus. Now are ye taken unawares, and lest ye escape me I shall bind you in your bed; of that be ye assured!" Laughing, she spake these words.

"Good-morrow, fair lady," quoth Gawain blithely. "I will do your will, as it likes me well. For I yield me readily, and pray your grace, and that is best, by my faith, since I needs must do so." Thus he jested again, laughing. "But an ye would, fair lady, grant me this grace that ye pray your prisoner to rise. I would get me from bed, and array me better; then could I talk with ye in more comfort."

"Nay, forsooth, fair sir," quoth the lady, "ye shall not rise; I will rede ye better. I shall keep ye here, since ye can do no other, and talk with my knight whom I have captured. For I know well that ye are Sir Gawain, whom all the world worships, wheresoever ye may ride. Your honor and your courtesy are praised by lords and ladies, by all who live. Now ye are here and we are alone; my lord and his men are afield, the serving men in their beds, and my maidens also, and the door shut upon us. And since in this hour I have him that all men love, I shall use my time well with speech, while it lasts. Ye are welcome to my company, for it behooves me in sooth to be your servant."

"In good faith," quoth Gawain, "I think me that I am not him of whom ye speak, for unworthy am I of such service as ye here proffer. In sooth, I were glad if I might set myself by word or service to your pleasure; a pure joy would it be to me!"

"In good faith, Sir Gawain," quoth the gay lady, "the praise and the prowess that pleases all ladies I lack them not, nor hold them light; yet are there ladies enough who would liever now have the knight in their hold, as I have ye here, to dally with your courteous words, to bring them comfort and to ease their cares, than much of the treasure and the gold that are theirs. And now, through the grace of Him who upholds the heavens, I have wholly in my power that which they all desire!"

Thus the lady, fair to look upon, made him great cheer, and Sir Gawain, with modest words, answered her again: "Madam," he quoth, "may Mary requite ye, for in good faith I have found in ye a noble frankness. Much courtesy have other folk shown me, but the honor they have done me is naught to the worship of yourself, who knoweth but good."

59. **rede**, advise, counsel. 64. **worships**, honors.

"By Mary," quoth the lady, "I think otherwise; for were I worth all the women alive and had I the wealth of the world in my hand, and might choose me a lord to my liking, then, for all that I have seen in ye, Sir Knight, of beauty and courtesy and blithe semblance, and for all that I have hearkened and hold for true, there should be no knight on earth to be chosen before ye."

"Well I wot," quoth Sir Gawain, "that ye have chosen a better; but I am proud that ye should so prize me, and as your servant do I hold ye my sovereign, and your knight am I, and may Christ reward ye."

So they talked of many matters till mid-morn was past, and ever the lady made as though she loved him, and the knight turned her speech aside. For though she were the brightest of maidens, yet had he forborne to show her love for the danger that awaited him, and the blow that must be given without delay.

Then the lady prayed her leave from him, and he granted it readily. And she gave him good-day, with laughing glance, but he must needs marvel at her words:

"Now He that speeds fair speech reward ye this disport; but that ye be Gawain my mind misdoubts me greatly."

"Wherefore?" quoth the knight quickly, fearing lest he had lacked in some courtesy.

And the lady spake: "So true a knight as Gawain is holden, and one so perfect in courtesy would never have tarried so long with a lady but he would of his courtesy have craved a kiss at parting."

Then quoth Gawain, "I wot I will do even as it may please ye, and kiss at your commandment, as a true knight should who forbears to ask for fear of displeasure."

At that she came near and bent down and kissed the knight, and each commended the other to Christ, and she went forth from the chamber softly.

7. **semblance**, appearance. 32. **disport**, entertainment. 39. **holden**, held to be, considered.

Then Sir Gawain rose and called his chamberlain and chose his garments, and when he was ready he gat him forth to Mass, and then went to meat, and made merry all day till the rising of the moon, and never had a knight fairer lodging than had he with those two noble ladies, the elder and the younger.

And ever the lord of the land chased the hinds through holt and heath till eventide, and then with much blowing of bugles and baying of hounds they bore the game homeward; and by the time daylight was done all the folk had returned to that fair castle. And when the lord and Sir Gawain met together, then were they both well pleased. The lord commanded them all to assemble in the great hall, and the ladies to descend with their maidens, and there, before them all, he bade the men fetch in the spoil of the day's hunting, and he called unto Gawain, and counted the tale of the beasts, and showed them unto him, and said, "What think ye of this game, Sir Knight? Have I deserved of ye thanks for my woodcraft?"

"Yea, I wis," quoth the other; "here is the fairest spoil I have seen this seven year in the winter season."

"And all this do I give ye, Gawain," quoth the host; "for by accord of covenant ye may claim it as your own."

"That, in sooth," quoth the other, "I grant you that same; and I have fairly won this within walls, and with as good will do I yield it to ye." With that he clasped his hands round the lord's neck and kissed him as courteously as he might. "Take ye here my spoils; no more have I won; ye should have it freely, though it were greater than this."

"'Tis good," said the host; "gramercy thereof. Yet were I fain to know where ye won this same favor, and if it were by your own wit?"

"Nay," answered Gawain, "that was not in the bond. Ask me no more. Ye have taken what was yours by right; be content with that."

54. **chamberlain**, the attendant whose duty it was to care for Gawain's needs while he was a guest in the castle. 62. **holt**, a small wood, or wooded hill. 76. **tale**, number. 96. **gramercy**, thanks.

They laughed and jested together, and sat them down to supper, where they were served with many dainties; and after supper they sat by the hearth, and wine was served out to them; and oft in their jesting they promised to observe on the morrow the same covenant that they had made before, and whatever chance might betide, to exchange their spoil, be it much or little, when they met at night. Thus they renewed their bargain before the whole court, and then the night-drink was served, and each courteously took leave of the other and gat him to bed.

By the time the cock had crowed thrice the lord of the castle had left his bed; Mass was sung and meat fitly served. The folk were forth to the wood ere the day broke; with hound and horn they rode over the plain, and uncoupled their dogs among the thorns. Soon they struck on the scent, and the hunt cheered on the hounds who were first to seize it, urging them with shouts. The others hastened to the cry, forty at once, and there rose such a clamor from the pack that the rocks rang again. The huntsmen spurred them on with shouting and blasts of the horn; and the hounds drew together to a thicket betwixt the water and a high crag in the cliff beneath the hillside. There where the rough rock fell ruggedly they, the huntsmen, fared to the finding, and cast about round the hill and the thicket behind them. The knights wist well what beast was within, and would drive him forth with the bloodhounds. And as they beat the bushes, suddenly over the beaters there rushed forth a wondrous great and fierce boar; long since had he left the herd to roam by himself. Grunting, he cast many to the ground, and fled forth at his best speed, without more mischief. The men hallooed loudly and cried, "*Hay! Hay!*" and blew the horns to urge on the hounds, and rode swiftly after the boar. Many a time did he turn to bay and tare the hounds, and they yelped, and howled shrilly. Then the men made ready their arrows and shot at him, but the points were turned on his thick hide, and the barbs would not bite upon him, for the shafts shivered in pieces, and the head but leaped again wherever it hit.

But when the boar felt the stroke of the arrows he waxed mad with rage, and turned on the hunters and tare many, so that, affrighted, they fled before him. But the lord on a swift steed pursued him, blowing his bugle; as a gallant knight he rode through the woodland chasing the boar till the sun grew low.

So did the hunters this day, while Sir Gawain lay in his bed lapped in rich gear; and the lady forgat not to salute him, for early was she at his side, to cheer his mood.

She came to the bedside and looked on the knight, and Gawain gave her fit greeting, and she greeted him again with ready words, and sat her by his side and laughed, and with a sweet look she spake to him:

"Sir, if ye be Gawain, I think it a wonder that ye be so stern and cold, and care not for the courtesies of friendship, but if one teach ye to know them ye cast the lesson out of your mind. Ye have soon forgotten what I taught ye yesterday, by all the truest tokens that I knew!"

"What is that?" quoth the knight. "I trow I know not. If it be sooth that ye say, then is the blame mine own."

"But I taught ye of kissing," quoth the fair lady. "Wherever a fair countenance is shown him, it behooves a courteous knight quickly to claim a kiss."

"Nay, my dear," said Sir Gawain, "cease that speech; that durst I not do lest I were denied, for if I were forbidden I wot I were wrong did I further entreat."

"I' faith," quoth the lady merrily, "ye may not be forbid; ye are strong enough to constrain by strength an ye will, were any so discourteous as to give ye denial."

"Yea, by heaven," said Gawain, "ye speak well; but threats profit little in the

35. **fared to the finding**, i.e., they proceeded to surround the place which contained the game, and then routed it out. 51. **tare**, tore.

land where I dwell, and so with a gift that is given not of good will! I am at your commandment to kiss when ye like, to take or to leave as ye list."

Then the lady bent her down and kissed him courteously.

And as they spake together she said, "I would learn somewhat from ye, an ye would not be wroth, for young ye are and fair, and so courteous and knightly as ye are known to be, the head of all chivalry, and versed in all wisdom of love and war— 'tis ever told of true knights how they adventured their lives for their true love, and endured hardships for her favors, and avenged her with valor, and eased her sorrows, and brought joy to her bower; and ye are the fairest knight of your time, and your fame and your honor are everywhere, yet I have sat by ye here twice, and never a word have I heard of love! Ye who are so courteous and skilled in such love ought surely to teach one so young and unskilled some little craft of true love! Why are ye so unlearned who art otherwise so famous? Or is it that ye deemed me unworthy to hearken to your teaching? For shame, Sir Knight! I come hither alone and sit at your side to learn of ye some skill; teach me of your wit, while my lord is from home."

"In good faith," quoth Gawain, "great is my joy and my profit that so fair a lady as ye are should deign to come hither, and trouble ye with so poor a man, and make sport with your knight with kindly countenance; it pleaseth me much. But that I, in my turn, should take it upon me to tell of love and such like matters to ye who know more by half, or a hundred fold, of such craft than I do, or ever shall in all my lifetime, by my troth 'twere folly indeed! I will work your will to the best of my might as I am bounden, and evermore will I be your servant, so help me Christ!"

Then often with guile she questioned that knight that she might win him to woo her, but he defended himself so fairly that none might in any wise blame him, and naught but bliss and harmless jesting was there between them. They laughed and talked together till at last she kissed him, and craved her leave of him, and went her way.

Then the knight arose and went forth to Mass, and afterwards dinner was served, and he sat and spake with the ladies all day. But the lord of the castle rode ever over the land chasing the wild boar, that fled through the thickets, slaying the best of his hounds and breaking their backs in sunder; till at last he was so weary he might run no longer, but made for a hole in a mound by a rock. He got the mound at his back and faced the hounds, whetting his white tusks and foaming at the mouth. The huntsmen stood aloof, fearing to draw nigh him; so many of them had been already wounded that they were loath to be torn with his tusks, so fierce he was and mad with rage. At length the lord himself came up, and saw the beast at bay, and the men standing aloof. Then quickly he sprang to the ground and drew out a bright blade, and waded through the stream to the boar.

When the beast was aware of the knight with weapon in hand, he set up his bristles and snorted loudly, and many feared for their lord lest he should be slain. Then the boar leaped upon the knight so that beast and man were one atop of the other in the water; but the boar had the worst of it, for the man had marked, even as he sprang, and set the point of his brand to the beast's chest, and drove it up to the hilt, so that the heart was split in twain, and the boar fell snarling, and was swept down by the water to where a hundred hounds seized on him, and the men drew him to shore for the dogs to slay.

Then was there loud blowing of horns and baying of hounds; the huntsmen smote off the boar's head, and hung the carcass by the four feet to a stout pole, and so went on their way homeward. The head they bore before the lord himself, who had slain the beast at the ford by force of his strong hand.

46. **bounden**, obligated.

91. **brand**, sword.

It seemed him o'er long ere he saw Sir Gawain in the hall, and he called, and the guest came to take that which fell to his share. And when he saw Gawain the lord laughed aloud, and bade them call the ladies and the household together, and he showed them the game, and told them the tale, how they hunted the wild boar through the woods, and of his length and breadth and height; and Sir Gawain commended his deeds and praised him for his valor, well proved, for so mighty a beast had he never seen before.

Then they handled the huge head, and the lord said aloud, "Now, Gawain, this game is your own by sure covenant, as ye right well know."

" 'Tis sooth," quoth the knight, "and as truly will I give ye all I have gained." He took the host round the neck, and kissed him courteously twice. "Now are we quits," he said, "this eventide, of all the covenants that we made since I came hither."

And the lord answered, "By Saint Giles, ye are the best I know; ye will be rich in a short space if ye drive such bargains!"

Then they set up the tables on trestles, and covered them with fair cloths, and lit waxen tapers on the walls. The knights sat and were served in the hall, and much game and glee was there round the hearth, with many songs, both at supper and after; song of Christmas, and new carols, with all the mirth one may think of. And ever that lovely lady sat by the knight, and with still stolen looks made such feint of pleasing him that Gawain marveled much, and was wroth with himself, but he could not for his courtesy return her fair glances, but dealt with her cunningly, however she might strive to wrest the thing.

When they had tarried in the hall so long as it seemed them good, they turned to the inner chamber and the wide hearthplace, and there they drank wine, and the host proffered to renew the covenant for New Year's Eve; but the knight craved leave to depart on the morrow, for it was nigh to the term when he must fulfill his pledge. But the lord would withhold him from so doing, and prayed him to tarry, and said:

"As I am a true knight I swear my troth that ye shall come to the Green Chapel to achieve your task on New Year's morn, long before prime. Therefore abide ye in your bed, and I will hunt in this wood, and hold ye to the covenant to exchange with me against all the spoil I may bring hither. For twice have I tried ye, and found ye true, and the morrow shall be the third time and the best. Make we merry now while we may, and think on joy, for misfortune may take a man whensoever it wills."

Then Gawain granted his request, and they brought them drink, and they gat them with lights to bed.

Sir Gawain lay and slept softly, but the lord, who was keen on woodcraft, was afoot early. After mass he and his men ate a morsel, and he asked for his steed; all the knights who should ride with him were already mounted before the hall gates.

'Twas a fair, frosty morning, for the sun rose red in ruddy vapor, and the welkin was clear of clouds. The hunters scattered them by a forest side, and the rocks rang again with the blast of their horns. Some came on the scent of a fox, and a hound gave tongue; the huntsmen shouted, and the pack followed in a crowd on the trail. The fox ran before them, and when they saw him they pursued him with noise and much shouting, and he wound and turned through many a thick grove, often cowering and hearkening in a hedge. At last by a little ditch he leaped out of a spinney, stole away slyly by a copse path, and so out of the wood and away from the hounds. But he went, ere he wist, to a

26. **Saint Giles.** He lived near Nîmes, France, in the sixth century and was the patron saint of the woodlands, of the stricken animals of the forest, and of the miserable among mankind, like cripples and lepers. He was especially venerated in England and Scotland during the Middle Ages. 34. **game,** sport, jest. 40. **feint,** pretense.

61. **prime,** early morning; between 6 and 9 A.M. 96. **spinney,** a thicket. 97. **copse,** a grove of second-growth trees which are cut out for firewood and then grow up again.

chosen tryst, and three started forth on him at once; so he must needs double back, and betake him to the wood again.

Then was it joyful to hearken to the hounds; when all the pack had met together and had sight of their game, they made as loud a din as if all the lofty cliffs had fallen clattering together. The huntsmen shouted and threatened, and followed close upon him so that he might scarce escape, but Reynard was wily, and he turned and doubled upon them, and led the lord and his men over the hills, now on the slopes, now in the vales, while the knight at home slept through the cold morning beneath his costly curtains.

But the fair lady of the castle rose betimes, and clad herself in a rich mantle that reached even to the ground, left her throat and her fair neck bare, and was bordered and lined with costly furs. On her head she wore no golden circlet, but a network of precious stones, that gleamed and shone through her tresses in clusters of twenty together. Thus she came into the chamber, closed the door after her, and set open a window, and called to him gayly, "Sir Knight, how may ye sleep? The morning is so fair."

Sir Gawain was deep in slumber, and in his dream he vexed him much for the destiny that should befall him on the morrow, when he should meet the knight at the Green Chapel, and abide his blow; but when the lady spake he heard her, and came to himself, and roused from his dream, and answered swiftly. The lady came laughing, and kissed him courteously, and he welcomed her fittingly with a cheerful countenance. He saw her so glorious and gayly dressed, so faultless of features and complexion, that it warmed his heart to look upon her.

They spake to each other smiling, and all was bliss and good cheer between them. They exchanged fair words, and much happiness was therein; yet was there a gulf between them, and she might win no more of her knight, for that gallant prince watched well his words—he would neither take her love nor frankly refuse it. He cared for his courtesy, lest he be deemed churlish, and yet more for his honor lest he be traitor to his host. "God forbid," quoth he to himself, "that it should so befall." Thus with courteous words did he set aside all the special speeches that came from her lips.

Then spake the lady to the knight: "Ye deserve blame if ye hold not that lady who sits beside ye above all else in the world, if ye have not already a love whom ye hold dearer, and like better, and have sworn such firm faith to that lady that ye care not to loose it—and that am I now fain to believe. And now I pray ye straitly that ye tell me that in truth, and hide it not."

And the knight answered, "By Saint John"—and he smiled as he spake—"no such love have I, nor do I think to have yet a while."

"That is the worst word I may hear," quoth the lady, "but in sooth I have mine answer; kiss me now courteously, and I will go hence. I can but mourn as a maiden that loves much."

Sighing, she stooped down and kissed him, and then she rose up and spake as she stood, "Now, dear, at our parting do me this grace: give me some gift, if it were but thy glove, that I may bethink me of my knight, and lessen my mourning."

"Now, I wis," quoth the knight, "I would that I had here the most precious thing that I possess on earth that I might leave ye as love-token, great or small, for ye have deserved forsooth more reward than I might give ye. But it is not to your honor to have at this time a glove for reward as gift from Gawain, and I am here on a strange errand, and have no man with me, nor mails with goodly things—that mislikes me much, lady, at this time; but each man must fare as he is taken, if for sorrow and ill."

"Nay, knight highly honored," quoth that lovesome lady, "though I have naught of yours, yet shall ye have somewhat of mine." With that she reached

1. **tryst**, a meeting-place; here, a hunter's blind.

71. **straitly**, strictly. 99. **mails**, chests.

him a ring of red gold with a sparkling stone therein, that shone even as the sun—wit ye well, it was worth many marks—but the knight refused it, and spake readily:

"I will take no gift, lady, at this time. I have none to give, and none will I take."

She prayed him to take it, but he refused her prayer, and sware in sooth that he would not have it.

The lady was sorely vexed, and said, "If ye refuse my ring as too costly, that ye will not be so highly beholden to me, I will give you my girdle as a lesser gift." With that she loosened a lace that was fastened at her side, knit upon her kirtle under her mantle. It was wrought of green silk, and gold, only braided by the fingers, and that she offered to the knight, and besought him though it were of little worth that he would take it, and he said nay, he would touch neither gold nor gear ere God give him grace to achieve the adventure for which he had come hither. "And therefore, I pray ye, displease ye not, and ask me no longer, for I may not grant it. I am dearly beholden to ye for the favor ye have shown me, and ever, in heat and cold, will I be your true servant."

"Now," said the lady, "ye refuse this silk, for it is simple in itself, and so it seems, indeed; lo, it is small to look upon and less in cost, but whoso knew the virtue that is knit therein he would, peradventure, value it more highly. For whatever knight is girded with this green lace, while he bears it knotted about him, there is no man under heaven can overcome him, for he may not be slain for any magic on earth."

Then Gawain bethought him, and it came into his heart that this were a jewel for the jeopardy that awaited him when he came to the Green Chapel to seek the return blow—could he so order it that he should escape unslain, 'twere a craft worth trying. Then he bare with her chiding, and let her say her say, and she pressed the girdle on him and prayed him to take it, and he granted her prayer, and she gave it him with good will, and besought him for her sake never to reveal it but to hide it loyally from her lord; and the knight agreed that never should any man know it, save they two alone. He thanked her often and heartily, and she kissed him for the third time.

Then she took her leave of him, and when she was gone Sir Gawain rose, and clad him in rich attire, and took the girdle, and knotted it round him, and hid it beneath his robes. Then he took his way to the chapel, and sought out a priest privily and prayed him to teach him better how his soul might be saved when he should go hence; and there he shrived him, and showed his misdeeds, both great and small, and besought mercy and craved absolution; and the priest assoiled him, and set him as clean as if doomsday had been on the morrow. And afterwards Sir Gawain made him merry with the ladies, with carols, and all kinds of joy, as never he did but that one day, even to nightfall; and all the men marveled at him, and said that never since he came thither had he been so merry.

Meanwhile the lord of the castle was abroad chasing the fox; awhile he lost him, and as he rode through a spinney he heard the hounds near at hand, and Reynard came creeping through a thick grove, with all the pack at his heels. Then the lord drew out his shining brand, and cast it at the beast, and the fox swerved aside for the sharp edge, and would have doubled back, but a hound was on him ere he might turn, and right before the horse's feet they all fell on him, and worried him fiercely, snarling the while.

Then the lord leaped from his saddle, and caught the fox from the jaws, and held it aloft over his head, and hallooed loudly, and many brave hounds bayed as they beheld it; and the hunters hied them thither, blowing their horns; all that bare bugles blew them at once, and all the others shouted. 'Twas the merriest meeting that ever men heard, the

4. **mark**, a small medieval coin worth about twenty-four cents. 13. **beholden**, in debt. 16. **knit**, knotted. **kirtle**, gown. 23. **gear**, garments, armor. 48. **craft**, trick.

69. **shrived**, confessed himself. 72. **assoiled**, absolved from sin.

clamor that was raised at the death of the fox. They rewarded the hounds, stroking them and rubbing their heads, and took Reynard and stripped him of his coat; then blowing their horns, they turned them homeward, for it was nigh nightfall.

The lord was gladsome at his return, and found a bright fire on the hearth, and the knight beside it, the good Sir Gawain, who was in joyous mood for the pleasure he had had with the ladies. He wore a robe of blue, that reached even to the ground, and a surcoat richly furred, that became him well. A hood like to the surcoat fell on his shoulders, and all alike were done about with fur. He met the host in the midst of the floor, and jesting, he greeted him, and said, "Now shall I be first to fulfill our covenant which we made together when there was no lack of wine." Then he embraced the knight, and kissed him thrice, as solemnly as he might.

"Of a sooth," quoth the other, "ye have good luck in the matter of this covenant, if ye made a good exchange!"

"Yet it matters naught of the exchange," quoth Gawain, "since what I owe is swiftly paid."

"Marry," said the other, "mine is behind, for I have hunted all this day, and naught have I got but this foul foxskin, and that is but poor payment for three such kisses as ye have here given me."

"Enough," quoth Sir Gawain; "I thank ye, by the Rood."

Then the lord told them of his hunting, and how the fox had been slain.

With mirth and minstrelsy, and dainties at their will, they made them as merry as a folk well might till 'twas time for them to sever, for at last they must needs betake them to their beds. Then the knight took his leave of the lord, and thanked him fairly.

"For the fair sojourn that I have had here at this high feast may the High King give ye honor. I give ye myself, as one of your servants, if ye so like; for I must needs, as you know, go hence with the morn, and ye will give me, as ye promised, a guide to show me the way to the Green Chapel, an God will suffer me on New Year's Day to deal the doom of my weird."

"By my faith," quoth the host, "all that ever I promised, that shall I keep with good will." Then he gave him a servant to set him in the way, and lead him by the downs, that he should have no need to ford the stream, and should fare by the shortest road through the groves; and Gawain thanked the lord for the honor done him. Then he would take leave of the ladies, and courteously he kissed them, and spake, praying them to receive his thanks, and they made like reply; then with many sighs they commended him to Christ, and he departed courteously from that fold. Each man that he met he thanked him for his service and his solace, and the pains he had been at to do his will; and each found it as hard to part from the knight as if he had ever dwelt with him.

Then they led him with torches to his chamber, and brought him to his bed to rest. That he slept soundly I may not say, for the morrow gave him much to think on. Let him rest awhile, for he was near that which he sought, and if ye will but listen to me I will tell ye how it fared with him thereafter.

IV

Now the New Year drew nigh, and the night passed, and the day chased the darkness, as is God's will; but wild weather wakened therewith. The clouds cast the cold to the earth, with enough of the north to slay them that lacked clothing. The snow drave smartly, and the whistling wind blew from the heights, and made great drifts in the valleys. The knight, lying in his bed, listened, for though his eyes were shut, he might sleep but little, and hearkened every cock that crew.

38. **Rood**, the cross of Christ.

57. **weird**, the Anglo-Saxon word for *fate*. Shakespeare speaks in *Macbeth* of the three witches as "the weird sisters." The usual expression was "to dree one's weird," i.e., to submit to one's fate.

He arose ere the day broke, by the light of a lamp that burned in his chamber, and called to his chamberlain, bidding him bring his armor and saddle his steed. The other gat him up, and fetched his garments, and robed Sir Gawain.

First he clad him in his clothes to keep off the cold, and then in his harness, which was well and fairly kept. Both hauberk and plates were well burnished, the rings of the rich byrnie freed from rust, and all as fresh as at first, so that the knight was fain to thank them. Then he did on each piece, and bade them bring his steed, while he put the fairest raiment on himself; his coat with its fair cognizance, adorned with precious stones upon velvet, with broidered seams, and all furred within with costly skins. And he left not the lace, the lady's gift, that Gawain forgot not, for his own good. When he had girded on his sword he wrapped the gift twice about him, swathed around his waist. The girdle of green silk set gayly and well upon the royal red cloth, rich to behold, but the knight ware it not for pride of the pendants, polished though they were with fair gold that gleamed brightly on the ends, but to save himself from sword and knife, when it behooved him to abide his hurt without question. With that the hero went forth, and thanked that kindly folk full often.

Then was Gringalet ready, that was great and strong, and had been well cared for and tended in every wise; in fair condition was that proud steed, and fit for a journey. Then Gawain went to him, and looked on his coat, and said by his sooth: "There is a folk in this place that thinketh on honor; much joy may they have, and the lord who maintains them, and may all good betide that lovely lady all her life long. Since they for charity cherish a guest, and hold honor in their hands, may He who holds the heaven on high requite them, and also ye all. And if I might live anywhile on earth, I would give ye full reward, readily, if so I might." Then he set foot in the stirrup and bestrode his steed, and his squire gave him his shield, which he laid on his shoulder. Then he smote Gringalet with his golden spurs, and the steed pranced on the stones and would stand no longer.

By that his man was mounted, who bare his spear and lance, and Gawain quoth, "I commend this castle to Christ; may he give it ever good fortune." Then the drawbridge was let down, and the broad gates unbarred and opened on both sides; the knight crossed himself, and passed through the gateway, and praised the porter, who knelt before the prince, and gave him good-day, and commended him to God. Thus the knight went on his way with the one man who should guide him to that dread place where he should receive rueful payment.

The two went by hedges where the boughs were bare, and climbed the cliffs where the cold clings. Naught fell from the heavens, but 'twas ill beneath them; mist brooded over the moor and hung on the mountains; each hill had a cap, a great cloak, of mist. The streams foamed and bubbled between their banks, dashing sparkling on the shores where they shelved downward. Rugged and dangerous was the way through the woods, till it was time for the sunrising. Then were they on a high hill; the snow lay white beside them, and the man who rode with Gawain drew rein by his master.

"Sir," he said, "I have brought ye hither, and now ye are not far from the place that ye have sought so specially. But I will tell ye for sooth, since I know ye well, and ye are such a knight as I well love, would ye follow my counsel ye would fare the better. The place whither ye go is accounted full perilous, for he who liveth in that waste is the worst on earth, for he is strong and fierce; and loveth to deal mighty blows; taller he is than any man on earth, and

18. **cognizance**, heraldic bearing, coat-of-arms.

94. **place that ye have sought.** Cf. this description with that of Grendel's pool in *Beowulf* (page 29, lines 24 ff.).

greater of frame than any four in Arthur's court, or in any other. And this is his custom at the Green Chapel: there may no man pass by that place, however proud his arms, but he does him to death by force of his hand, for he is a discourteous knight, and shows no mercy. Be he churl or chaplain who rides by that chapel, monk or Mass-
10 priest, or any man else, he thinks it as pleasant to slay them as to pass alive himself. Therefore, I tell ye, as sooth as ye sit in saddle, if ye come there and that knight know it, ye shall be slain, though ye had twenty lives; trow me that truly! He has dwelt here full long and seen many a combat; ye may not defend ye against his blows. Therefore, good Sir Gawain, let the man be, and
20 get ye away some other road; for God's sake seek ye another land, and there may Christ speed ye! And I will hie me home again, and I promise ye further that I will swear by God and the saints, or any other oath ye please, that I will keep counsel faithfully, and never let any wit the tale that ye fled for fear of any man."

"Gramercy," quoth Gawain, but ill-
30 pleased. "Good fortune be his who wishes me good, and that thou wouldst keep faith with me I will believe; but didst thou keep it never so truly, an I passed here and fled for fear as thou sayest, then were I a coward knight, and might not be held guiltless. So I will to the chapel, let chance what may, and talk with that man, even as I may list, whether for weal or for woe, as fate
40 may have it. Fierce though he may be in fight, yet God knoweth well how to save his servants."

"Well," quoth the other, "now that ye have said so much that ye will take your own harm on yourself, and ye be pleased to lose your life, I will neither let nor keep ye. Have here your helm and the spear in your hand, and ride down this same road beside the rock
50 till ye come to the bottom of the valley, and there look a little to the left hand, and ye shall see in that vale the chapel, and the grim man who keeps it. Now fare ye well, noble Gawain; for all the gold on earth I would not go with ye nor bear ye fellowship one step farther." With that the man turned his bridle into the wood, smote the horse with his spurs as hard as he could, and galloped off, leaving the knight alone. 60

Quoth Gawain, "I will neither greet nor groan, but commend myself to God, and yield me to his will."

Then the knight spurred Gringalet, and rode adown the path close in by a bank beside a grove. So he rode through the rough thicket, right into the dale, and there he halted, for it seemed him wild enough. No sign of a chapel could he see, but high and burnt banks on 70 either side and rough, rugged crags with great stones above. An ill-looking place he thought it.

Then he drew in his horse and looked round to seek the chapel, but he saw none and thought it strange. Then he saw as it were a mound on a level space of land by a bank beside the stream where it ran swiftly; the water bubbled within as if boiling. The knight turned 80 his steed to the mound, and lighted down and tied the rein to the branch of a linden; and he turned to the mound and walked round it, questioning with himself what it might be. It had a hole at the end and at either side, and was overgrown with clumps of grass, and it was hollow within as an old cave or the crevice of a crag; he knew not what it might be. 90

"Ah," quoth Gawain, "can this be the Green Chapel? Here might the devil say his matins at midnight! Now I wis there is wizardry here. 'Tis an ugly oratory, all overgrown with grass, and 'twould well beseem that fellow in green to say his devotions on devil's wise. Now feel I in five wits, 'tis the foul fiend himself who hath set me this tryst, to destroy me here! This is a 100 chapel of mischance; ill-luck betide it,

8. **churl**, peasant. 39. **list**, wish. 47. **let**, hinder.

61. **greet**, weep. Compare this scene with Hrothgar's description of Grendel's pool and Beowulf's reply (page 29). 90. **what it might be.** The Green Chapel was probably a burial mound, in which were supposed to lurk fairies or monsters. Great Britain and Ireland are filled with such mounds. 93. **matins**, morning prayers. 95. **oratory**, place for prayer; small chapel. 98. **wits**, senses.

'tis the cursedest kirk that ever I came in!"

Helmet on head and lance in hand, he came up to the rough dwelling, when he heard over the high hill beyond the brook, as it were in a bank, a wondrous fierce noise, that rang in the cliff as if it would cleave asunder. 'Twas as if one ground a scythe on a grindstone; it whirred and whetted like water on a mill-wheel and rushed and rang, terrible to hear.

"By God," quoth Gawain, "I trow that gear is preparing for the knight who will meet me here. Alas! naught may help me, yet should my life be forfeit, I fear not a jot!" With that he called aloud: "Who waiteth in this place to give me tryst? Now is Gawain come hither; if any man will aught of him, let him hasten hither now or never."

"Stay," quoth one on the bank above his head, "and ye shall speedily have that which I promised ye." Yet for a while the noise of whetting went on ere he appeared, and then he came forth from a cave in the crag with a fell weapon, a Danish ax newly dight, wherewith to deal the blow. An evil head it had, four feet large, no less, sharply ground, and bound to the handle by the lace that gleamed brightly. And the knight himself was all green as before, face and foot, locks and beard, but now he was afoot. When he came to the water he would not wade it, but sprang over with the pole of his ax, and strode boldly over the bent that was white with snow.

Sir Gawain went to meet him but he made no low bow. The other said, "Now, fair sir, one may trust thee to keep tryst. Thou art welcome, Gawain, to my place. Thou hast timed thy coming as befits a true man. Thou knowest the covenant set between us; at this time twelve months agone thou didst take that which fell to thee, and I at this New Year will readily requite thee. We are in this valley, verily alone; here are no knights to sever us, do what we will. Have off thy helm from thine head, and have here thy pay; make me no more talking than I did then when thou didst strike off my head with one blow."

"Nay," quoth Gawain, "by God that gave me life, I shall make no moan whatever befall me, but make thou ready for the blow, and I shall stand still and say never a word to thee, do as thou wilt."

With that he bent his head and showed his neck all bare, and made as if he had no fear, for he would not be thought adread.

Then the Green Knight made him ready, and grasped his grim weapon to smite Gawain. With all his force he bore it aloft with a mighty feint of slaying him; had it fallen as straight as he aimed he who was ever doughty of deed had been slain by the blow. But Gawain swerved aside as the ax came gliding down to slay him as he stood, and shrank a little with the shoulders, for the sharp iron. The other heaved up the blade and rebuked the prince with many proud words:

"Thou art not Gawain," he said, "who is held so valiant, that never feared he man by hill or vale, but *thou* shrinkest for fear ere thou feelest hurt. Such cowardice did I never hear of Gawain! Neither did *I* flinch from thy blow, or make strife in King Arthur's nall. My head fell to my feet, and yet I fled not; but thou didst wax faint of heart ere any harm befell. Wherefore must I be deemed the braver knight."

Quoth Gawain: "I shrank once, but so will I no more; though an *my* head fall on the stones, I cannot replace it. But haste, Sir Knight, by thy faith, and bring me to the point, deal me my destiny, and do it out of hand, for I will stand thee a stroke and move no more till thine ax have hit me—my troth on it."

"Have at thee, then," quoth the other, and heaved aloft the ax with fierce mien, as if he were mad. He struck at him fiercely but wounded him not, withholding his hand ere it might strike him.

1. **kirk**, church. 14. **gear is preparing**, war equipment is being prepared. 27. **fell**, cruel. 28. **dight**, prepared. 35. **he would not wade it**, i.e., because magic was supposed to be broken by running water. 38. **bent**, moor, field.

94. **out of hand**, at once.

Gawain abode the stroke, and flinched in no limb, but stood still as a stone or the stump of a tree that is fast rooted in the rocky ground with a hundred roots.

Then spake gayly the man in green, "So now thou hast thine heart whole, it behooves me to smite. Hold aside thy hood that Arthur gave thee, and keep thy neck thus bent lest it cover it again."

Then Gawain said angrily, "Why talk on thus? Thou dost threaten too long. I hope thy heart misgives thee."

"Forsooth," quoth the other, "so fiercely thou speakest I will no longer let thine errand wait its reward." Then he braced himself to strike, frowning with lips and brow; 'twas no marvel that it pleased but ill him who hoped for no rescue. He lifted the ax lightly and let it fall with the edge of the blade on the bare neck. Though he struck swiftly, it hurt him no more than on the one side where it severed the skin. The sharp blade cut into the flesh so that the blood ran over his shoulder to the ground. And when the knight saw the blood staining the snow, he sprang forth, swift-foot, more than a spear's length, seized his helmet and set it on his head, cast his shield over his shoulder, drew out his bright sword, and spake boldly—never since he was born was he half so blithe: "Stop, Sir Knight; bid me no more blows. I have stood a stroke here without flinching, and if thou give me another, I shall requite thee, and give thee as good again. By the covenant made betwixt us in Arthur's hall but one blow falls to me here. Halt, therefore!"

Then the Green Knight drew off from him and leaned on his ax, setting the shaft on the ground, and looked on Gawain as he stood all armed and faced him fearlessly—at heart it pleased him well. Then he spake merrily in a loud voice, and said to the knight: "Bold sir, be not so fierce; no man here hath done thee wrong, nor will do, save by covenant, as we made at Arthur's court. I promised thee a blow and thou hast it—hold thyself well paid! I release thee of all other claims. If I had been so minded I might perchance have given thee a rougher buffet. First I menaced thee with a feigned one, and hurt thee not for the covenant that we made in the first night, and which thou didst hold truly. All the gain didst thou give me as a true man should. The other feint I proffered thee for the morrow: my fair wife kissed thee, and thou didst give me her kisses—for both those days I gave thee two blows without scathe—true man, true return. But the third time thou didst fail, and therefore hadst thou that blow. For 'tis *my* weed thou wearest, that same woven girdle; my own wife wrought it, that do I wot for sooth. Now know I well thy kisses, and thy conversation, and the wooing of my wife, for 'twas mine own doing. I sent her to try thee, and in sooth I think thou art the most faultless knight that ever trod earth. As a pearl among white peas is of more worth than they, so is Gawain, i' faith, by other knights. But thou didst lack a little, Sir Knight, and wast wanting in loyalty, yet that was for no evil work, nor for wooing neither, but because thou lovedst thy life—therefore I blame thee the less."

Then the other stood a great while, still sorely angered and vexed within himself; all the blood flew to his face, and he shrank for shame as the Green Knight spake; and the first words he said were, "Cursed be ye, cowardice and covetousness, for in ye is the destruction of virtue." Then he loosed the girdle, and gave it to the knight. "Lo, take there the falsity; may foul befall it! For fear of thy blow cowardice bade me make friends with covetousness and forsake the customs of largess and loyalty, which befit all knights. Now I am faulty and false and have been afeared; from treachery and untruth come sorrow and care. I avow to thee, Sir Knight, that I have ill done; do then thy will. I shall be more wary hereafter."

35. **bid**, offer.

66. **scathe**, injury. 69. **weed**, garment. 97. **largess**, generosity.

Then the other laughed and said gayly:

"I wot I am whole of the hurt I had, and thou hast made such free confession of thy misdeeds, and hast so borne the penance of mine ax edge, that I hold thee absolved from that sin, and purged as clean as if thou hadst never sinned since thou wast born. And this girdle that is wrought with gold and green, like my raiment, do I give thee, Sir Gawain, that thou mayest think upon this chance when thou goest forth among princes of renown, and keep this for a token of the adventure of the Green Chapel, as it chanced between chivalrous knights. And thou shalt come again with me to my dwelling and pass the rest of this feast in gladness." Then the lord laid hold of him, and said, "I wot we shall soon make peace with my wife, who was thy bitter enemy."

"Nay, forsooth," said Sir Gawain, and seized his helmet and took it off swiftly, and thanked the knight; "I have fared ill, may bliss betide thee, and may He who rules all things reward thee swiftly. Commend me to that courteous lady, thy fair wife, and to the other my honored ladies, who have beguiled their knight with skillful craft. But 'tis no marvel if one be made a fool and brought to sorrow by women's wiles, for so was Adam beguiled by one, and Solomon by many, and Samson all too soon, for Delilah dealt him his doom; and David thereafter was wedded with Bathsheba, which brought him much sorrow—if one might love a woman and believe her not, 'twere great gain! And since all they were beguiled by women, methinks 'tis the less blame to me that I was misled! But as for thy girdle, that will I take with good will, not for gain of the gold, nor for samite, nor silk, nor the costly pendants, neither for weal nor for worship, but in sign of my frailty. I shall look upon it when I ride in renown and remind myself of the fault and faintness of the flesh; and so when pride uplifts me for prowess of arms, the sight of this lace shall humble my heart. But one thing would I pray, if it displease thee not: since thou art lord of yonder land wherein I have dwelt, tell me what thy rightful name may be, and I will ask no more."

"That will I truly," quoth the other. "Bernlak de Hautdesert am I called in this land. Morgain le Fay dwelleth in mine house, and through knowledge of clerkly craft hath she taken many. For long time was she the mistress of Merlin, who knew well all you knights of the court. Morgain the goddess is she called therefore, and there is none so haughty but she can bring him low. She sent me in this guise to yon fair hall to test the truth of the renown that is spread abroad of the valor of the Round Table. She taught me this marvel to betray your wits, to vex Guinevere, and fright her to death by the man who spake with his head in his hand at the high table. That is she who is at home, that ancient lady, she is even thine aunt, Arthur's half-sister, the daughter of the Duchess of Tintagel, who afterwards married King Uther. Therefore I bid thee, knight, come to thine aunt, and make merry in thine house; my folk love thee, and I wish thee as well as any man on earth, by my faith, for thy true dealing."

But Sir Gawain said nay, he would in no wise do so; so they embraced and kissed, and commended each other to the Prince of Paradise, and parted right there, on the cold ground. Gawain on his steed rode swiftly to the King's hall, and the Green Knight got him whithersoever he would.

Sir Gawain, who had thus won grace of his life, rode through wild ways on Gringalet; oft he lodged in a house, and oft without, and many adventures did he have and came off victor full often, as at this time I cannot relate in tale. The hurt that he had in his neck was healed; he bare the shining girdle as a baldric bound by his side, and made fast with a knot 'neath his left arm, in token that he

60. **Morgain le Fay**, sister of Arthur. In the earliest forms of the Arthurian legend she is a mighty enchantress. Morgain le Fay hated Guinevere and revealed to Arthur her love for Lancelot. 64. **Merlin**, a mighty enchanter at Arthur's court.

was taken in a fault—and thus he came in safety again to the court.

Then joy awakened in that dwelling when the King knew that the good Sir Gawain was come, for he deemed it gain. King Arthur kissed the knight, and the Queen also, and many valiant knights sought to embrace him. They asked him how he had fared, and he told them all that had chanced to him—the adventure of the chapel, the fashion of the knight, the love of the lady—at last of the lace. He showed them the wound in the neck which he won for his disloyalty at the hand of the knight; the blood flew to his face for shame as he told the tale.

"Lo, lady," he quoth, and handled the lace, "this is the bond of the blame that I bear in my neck, this is the harm and the loss I have suffered, the cowardice and covetousness in which I was caught, the token of my covenant in which I was taken. And I must needs wear it so long as I live, for none may hide his harm, but undone it may not be, for if it hath clung to thee once, it may never be severed."

Then the King comforted the knight, and the court laughed loudly at the tale, and all made accord that the lords and the ladies who belonged to the Round Table, each hero among them, should wear bound about him a baldric of bright green for the sake of Sir Gawain. And to this was agreed all the honor of the Round Table, and he who ware it was honored the more thereafter, as it is testified in the best book of romance. That in Arthur's days this adventure befell, the book of Brutus bears witness. For since that bold knight came hither first, and the siege and the assault were ceased at Troy, I wis

Many a venture herebefore
Hath fallen such as this;
May He that bare the crown of thorn
Bring us unto His bliss.

Amen.

(c.1375)

40. book of Brutus. Several medieval romances purported to tell how Brutus came to Britain and founded the British royal line. **47. His bliss.** Medieval stories generally ended with a moral, frequently expressed in verse.

SIR THOMAS MALORY (1400-1471)

From LE MORTE DARTHUR

THE DEATH OF ARTHUR

Note

By the middle of the fifteenth century the English Middle Ages were drawing to a close, and the ideals of chivalry were fading. The Hundred Years' War had proved that foot soldiers and bowmen were more effective in battle than knights in their heavy but vulnerable armor; while the Wars of the Roses, which were nothing more than a feud between the two noble houses of York and Lancaster, sapped the strength of the ancient nobility which had upheld most strongly the traditions of chivalry. In the second half of the fifteenth century two signs appeared of the Renaissance which was to change the intellectual and literary values of the past. In 1477 Caxton printed the first book in England. Thereafter printing developed a reading public outside of the court circle, and prepared for such channels of modern literature as the essay and the novel. Equally important for England was the rise of the Tudors, whose first member to reach the throne was Henry VII. In 1485 he was hailed king of England upon Bosworth Field, where Richard III was killed. Bosworth Field symbolized the end of the Middle Ages as far as chivalry was concerned. In the new age of the Renaissance a man was valued for the intellect which God had given him, and his native talents might enable him to rise as high in the government as any belted earl. Actually the Tudors chose their statesmen and their new nobles from the middle classes, which began to prosper with the growth of exploration, industry, and trade. Nationalism replaced class feeling, and the new view of life was henceforth mirrored in English literature.

It was during the sunset of chivalry, in the second half of the fifteenth century, that Sir Thomas Malory, M.P., a friend and companion at arms of the chivalrous Richard Beauchamp, earl of Warwick, known as the King Maker, who had served with the earl on many of his campaigns, found time, during the temporary defeat of his party and his own banishment from the court during the Wars of the Roses, to set down in prose a summary of the chief romances dealing with King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. By birth and experience he was fitted for the task, and never did medieval knight take himself more seriously. *Le Morte Darthur* is a perfect Gothic tapestry in which chivalry is depicted stiffly, naïvely, seriously, with considerable vitality and power, but without any sense of humor, and with slight appreciation of the vivid pulse and throb of the emotions of the individual as the Renaissance was to know them. The book stands side by side with the Gothic architecture, sculpture, and stained glass of the Middle Ages to inculcate the ideals of the age of chivalry.

Caxton published *Le Morte Darthur* in 1485, and in his preface one can already see a changing attitude toward medieval romance, both in a doubt as to the historic truth of Arthur, and a general appeal to all classes or estates rather than to the nobles alone.

The following selection is taken from the concluding chapters of Malory's romance about the deeds of Arthur and his knights. It relates the usurpation of his kingdom by Mordred, his illegitimate son, the return of Arthur, the last battle, which completed the disintegration of the famous Round Table, the death of Mordred, and the passing of Arthur.

BOOK XXI. CHAPTER I

HOW SIR MORDRED PRESUMED AND TOOK ON HIM TO BE KING OF ENGLAND, AND WOULD HAVE MARRIED THE QUEEN, HIS UNCLE'S WIFE

As Sir Mordred was ruler of all England, he did do make letters as though that they came from beyond the sea, and the letters specified that King Arthur was slain in battle with Sir Lancelot. Wherefore Sir Mordred made a parliament, and called the lords together, and there he made them to choose him king; and so was he crowned at Canterbury, and held a feast there fifteen days; and afterwards he drew him unto Winchester, and there he took the Queen Guenever, and said plainly that he would wed her which was his uncle's wife and his father's wife. And so he made ready for the feast, and a day prefixed that they should be wedded; wherefore Queen Guenever was passing heavy. But she durst not discover her heart, but spake fair, and agreed to Sir Mordred's will. Then she desired of Sir Mordred for to go to London, to buy all manner of things that longed unto the wedding. And by cause of her fair speech Sir Mordred trusted her well enough, and gave her leave to go.

And so when she came to London she took the Tower of London, and suddenly in all haste possible she stuffed it with all manner of victual, and well garnished it with men, and so kept it. Then when Sir Mordred wist and understood how he was beguiled, he was passing wroth out of measure. And a short tale for to make, he went and laid a mighty siege about the Tower of London, and made many great assaults thereat, and threw many great engines unto them, and shot great guns. But all might not prevail Sir Mordred, for Queen Guenever would never for fair speech nor for foul, would never trust to come in his hands again.

Then came the Bishop of Canterbury, the which was a noble clerk and an holy man, and thus he said to Sir Mordred:

"Sir, what will ye do? Will ye first displease God and sithen shame yourself, and all knighthood? Is not King Arthur your uncle, no farther but your mother's brother, and on her himself King Arthur begat you upon his own sister; therefore how may you wed your father's wife? Sir," said the noble clerk, "leave this opinion or I shall curse you with book and bell and candle."

"Do thou thy worst," said Sir Mordred; "wit thou well I shall defy thee."

"Sir," said the Bishop, "and wit you well I shall not fear me to do that me ought to do. Also where ye noise where my lord Arthur is slain, and that is not so, and therefore ye will make a foul work in this land."

"Peace, thou false priest," said Sir Mordred, "for an thou chafe me any more I shall make strike off thy head."

So the Bishop departed and did the cursing in the most orgulist wise that might be done. And then Sir Mordred sought the Bishop of Canterbury, for to have slain him. Then the Bishop fled, and took part of his goods with him, and went nigh unto Glastonbury; and there he was as priest hermit in a

2. **do make letters**, cause letters to be written. **14-15. his uncle's . . . and his father's wife.** Arthur was born of Uther Pendragon and Igerna, the wife of the Duke of Cornwall. Igerna later had a daughter whom Arthur loved, and who bore him Mordred. 23. **longed**, were suitable for. 28. **Tower of London**, an anachronism, as is the mention of guns in line 39; but Malory visualized the age of Arthur in terms of contemporary England, and here he probably recalled how Queen Margaret of Anjou had withstood Edward IV.

32. **wist**, knew. 45. **clerk**, cleric, priest. 49. **sithen**, afterwards. 56. **curse**, etc., excommunicate by reading the formula, dashing a lighted candle to the ground, and tolling a bell. 63. **noise where**, rumor that. 68. **an**, if. 71. **most orgulist**, proudest. 76. **Glastonbury**, where the Holy Grail was believed to be. The town is in Somersetshire.

chapel, and lived in poverty and in holy prayers, for well he understood that mischievous war was at hand.

Then Sir Mordred sought on Queen Guenever by letters and sondes, and by fair means and foul means, for to have her to come out of the Tower of London; but all this availed not, for she answered him shortly, openly, and privily, that she had lever slay herself than to be married with him.

Then came word to Sir Mordred that King Arthur had araised the siege for Sir Lancelot, and he was coming homeward with a great host, to be avenged upon Sir Mordred; wherefore Sir Mordred made write writs to all the barony of this land, and much people drew to him. For then was the common voice among them that with Arthur was none other life but war and strife, and with Sir Mordred was great joy and bliss. Thus was Sir Arthur depraved, and evil said of. And many there were that King Arthur had made up of nought, and given them lands, might not then say him a good word. Lo ye all Englishmen, see ye not what a mischief here was! for he that was the most king and knight of the world, and most loved the fellowship of noble knights, and by him they were all upholden, now might not these Englishmen hold them content with him. Lo, thus was the old custom and usage of this land; and also men say that we of this land have not yet lost nor forgotten that custom and usage. Alas, this is a great default of us Englishmen, for there may no thing please us no term.

And so fared the people at that time, they were better pleased with Sir Mordred than they were with King Arthur; and much people drew unto Sir Mordred, and said they would abide with him for better and for worse. And so Sir Mordred drew with a great host to Dover, for there he heard say that Sir Arthur would arrive, and so he thought to beat his own father from his lands; and the most part of all England held with Sir Mordred, the people were so new fangle.

5. **sondes**, messages or messengers. 10. **lever**, rather. 13. **araised the siege for Sir Lancelot.** Some time after the discovery of the love of Lancelot and Guinevere, Arthur pursued Lancelot overseas to Benwick (Bayonne), where he besieged him and where Lancelot wounded Gawain. Mordred's usurpation of the kingdom forced Arthur to raise the siege and return home. 23. **depraved**, defamed. 32. **upholden**, supported. 39. **term**, time.

CHAPTER II

HOW AFTER THAT KING ARTHUR HAD TIDINGS HE RETURNED AND CAME TO DOVER, WHERE SIR MORDRED MET HIM TO LET HIS LANDING; AND OF THE DEATH OF SIR GAWAIN

And so as Sir Mordred was at Dover with his host, there came King Arthur with a great navy of ships, and galleys, and carracks. And there was Sir Mordred ready awaiting upon his landing, to let his own father to land upon the land that he was king over. Then there was launching of great boats and small, and full of noble men of arms; and there was much slaughter of gentle knights, and many a full bold baron was laid full low, on both parties. But King Arthur was so courageous that there might no manner of knights let him to land, and his knights fiercely followed him; and so they landed maugre Sir Mordred and all his power, and put Sir Mordred aback, that he fled and all his people.

So when this battle was done, King Arthur let bury his people that were dead. And then was noble Sir Gawain found in a great boat, lying more than half dead. When Sir Arthur wist that Sir Gawain was laid so low, he went unto him; and there the King made sorrow out of measure, and took Sir Gawain in his arms, and thrice he there swooned. And then when he awaked, he said: "Alas, Sir Gawain, my sister's son, here now thou liest, the man in the world that I loved most; and now is my joy gone, for now, my nephew Sir Gawain, I will discover me unto your person: in Sir Lancelot and you I had my joy, and mine affiance, and now most have I lost my joy of you both;

52. **new fangle**, fickle. 55. **galley**, a small single-decked ship propelled by oars and sails. 56. **carrack**, a large ship like a galleon. 58. **let**, hinder. 68. **maugre**, in spite of. 69. **power**, army. 73. **let bury**, caused or allowed to be buried. 88. **affiance**, trust, confidence.

wherefore all mine earthly joy is gone from me."

"Mine uncle King Arthur," said Sir Gawain, "wit you well my death day is come, and all is through mine own hastiness and willfulness; for I am smitten upon the old wound the which Sir Lancelot gave me, on the which I feel well I must die; and had Sir Lancelot been with you as he was, this unhappy war had never begun; and of all this am I causer, for Sir Lancelot and his blood, through their prowess, held all your cankered enemies in subjection and daunger. And now," said Sir Gawain, "ye shall miss Sir Lancelot. But alas, I would not accord with him, and therefore," said Sir Gawain, "I pray you, fair uncle, that I may have paper, pen, and ink, that I may write to Sir Lancelot a cedle with mine own hands."

And then when paper and ink was brought, then Gawain was set up weakly by King Arthur, for he was shriven a little tofore; and then he wrote thus, as the French book maketh mention:

"Unto Sir Lancelot, flower of all noble knights that ever I heard of or saw by my days, I, Sir Gawain, King Lot's son of Orkney, sister's son unto the noble King Arthur, send thee greeting, and let thee have knowledge that the tenth day of May I was smitten upon the old wound that thou gavest me afore the city of Benwick, and through the same wound that thou gavest me I am come to my death-day. And I will that all the world wit that I, Sir Gawain, knight of the Table Round, sought my death, and not through thy deserving, but it was mine own seeking; wherefore I beseech thee, Sir Lancelot, to return again unto this realm, and see my tomb, and pray some prayer more or less for my soul. And this same day that I wrote this cedle, I was hurt to the death in the same wound, the which I had of thy hand, Sir Lancelot; for of a more nobler man might I not be slain. Also Sir Lancelot, for all the love that ever was betwixt us, make no tarrying, but come over the sea in all haste, that thou mayst with thy noble knights rescue that noble King that made thee knight, that is my lord Arthur, for he is full straitly bestad with a false traitor, that is my half-brother, Sir Mordred; and he hath let crown him king, and would have wedded my lady Queen Guenever, and so had he done had she not put herself in the Tower of London. And so the tenth day of May last past, my lord Arthur and we all landed upon them at Dover; and there we put that false traitor, Sir Mordred, to flight, and there it misfortuned me to be stricken upon thy stroke. And at the date of this letter was written, but two hours and a half afore my death, written with mine own hand, and so subscribed with part of my heart's blood. And I require thee, most famous knight of the world, that thou wilt see my tomb."

And then Sir Gawain wept, and King Arthur wept; and then they swooned both. And when they awaked both, the King made Sir Gawain to receive his Savior. And then Sir Gawain prayed the king for to send for Sir Lancelot, and to cherish him above all other knights. And so at the hour of noon Sir Gawain yielded up the spirit; and then the King let inter him in a chapel within Dover Castle; and there yet all men may see the skull of him, and the same wound is seen that Sir Lancelot gave him in battle. Then was it told the King that Sir Mordred had pyghte a new field upon Barham Down. And upon the morn the King rode thither to him, and there was a great battle betwixt them, and much people was slain on both parties; but at the last Sir Arthur's party stood best, and Sir Mordred and his party fled unto Canterbury.

15. **daunger**, awe; submission. 21. **cedle**, letter. From *cedle* comes our word *schedule*. 27. **French book.** Malory took many of his stories from French romances, but this book is an imaginary source.

58. **full straitly bestad**, badly situated. 60. **let crown him**, caused himself to be crowned. 70. **date of**, date when. 80. **receive his Savior.** The host, or communion wafer, is often so-called as being symbolic of the body and blood of Christ which is believed by the Roman Catholics to be transubstantiated during the Mass at the Elevation. 91. **pyghte**, pitched.

CHAPTER III

HOW AFTER, SIR GAWAIN'S GHOST APPEARED TO KING ARTHUR, AND WARNED HIM THAT HE SHOULD NOT FIGHT THAT DAY

And then the King let search all the towns for his knights that were slain, and interred them; and salved them with soft salves that so sore were wounded. Then much people drew unto King Arthur. And then they said that Sir Mordred warred upon King Arthur with wrong. And then King Arthur drew him with his host down by the seaside westward toward Salisbury; and there was a day assigned betwixt King Arthur and Sir Mordred, that they should meet upon a down beside Salisbury, and not far from the seaside; and this day was assigned on a Monday after Trinity Sunday, whereof King Arthur was passing glad, that he might be avenged upon Sir Mordred.

Then Sir Mordred araised much people about London, for they of Kent, Southsex, and Surrey, Estsex, and of Southfolk, and of Northfolk, held the most part with Sir Mordred; and many a full noble knight drew unto Sir Mordred and to the King; but they that loved Sir Lancelot drew unto Sir Mordred.

So upon Trinity Sunday at night, King Arthur dreamed a wonderful dream, and that was this: That him seemed he sat upon a chaflet in a chair, and the chair was fast to a wheel, and thereupon sat King Arthur in the richest cloth of gold that might be made; and the King thought there was under him, far from him, an hideous deep black water, and therein were all manner of serpents, and worms, and wild beasts, foul and horrible; and suddenly the King thought the wheel turned up-so-down, and he fell among the serpents, and every beast took him by a limb; and then the King cried as he lay in his bed and slept, "Help."

16. **Trinity Sunday**, the eighth Sunday after Easter. It is sacred to the Trinity. 30. **chaflet**, small platform. 31. **wheel.** Arthur dreams of Fortune's wheel, which was depicted in the Middle Ages as having upon its top kings on thrones, while on one side kings ascended to the top, and on the other descended into a pit of water, mud, or fire.

And then knights, squires, and yeomen awaked the King; and then he was so amazed that he wist not where he was; and then he fell on slumbering again, not sleeping nor thoroughly waking. So the King seemed verily that there came Sir Gawain unto him with a number of fair ladies with him. And when King Arthur saw him, then he said:

"Welcome, my sister's son; I weened thou hadst been dead, and now I see thee on live, much am I beholding unto almighty Jesu. O fair nephew and my sister's son, what be these ladies that hither be come with you?"

"Sir," said Sir Gawain, "all these be ladies for whom I have foughten when I was man living, and all these are those that I did battle for in righteous quarrel; and God hath given them that grace at their great prayer, by cause I did battle for them, that they should bring me hither unto you. Thus much hath God given me leave, for to warn you of your death; for an ye fight as tomorn with Sir Mordred, as ye both have assigned, doubt ye not ye must be slain, and the most part of your people on both parties. And for the great grace and goodness that almighty Jesu hath unto you, and for pity of you, and many more other good men there shall be slain, God hath sent me to you of his special grace, to give you warning that in no wise ye do battle as tomorn, but that ye take a treaty for a month day; and proffer you largely, so as tomorn to be put in a delay. For within a month shall come Sir Lancelot with all his noble knights, and rescue you worshipfully, and slay Sir Mordred, and all that ever will hold with him."

Then Sir Gawain and all the ladies vanished. And anon the King called upon his knights, squires, and yeomen, and charged them wightly to fetch his noble lords and wise bishops unto him. And when they were come, the King told them his avision, what Sir Gawain had told him, and warned him that if he

49. **the King seemed verily**, it seemed actually to the King. 70. **assigned**, determined. 81. **proffer you largely**, make liberal offers. 90. **wightly**, earnestly.

fought on the morn he should be slain. Then the King commanded Sir Lucan the Butler, and his brother Sir Bedivere, with two bishops with them, and charged them in any wise, an they might,

"Take a treaty for a month day with Sir Mordred, and spare not, proffer him lands and goods as much as ye think best."

So then they departed, and came to Sir Mordred, where he had a grim host of an hundred thousand men. And there they entreated Sir Mordred long time. And at the last Sir Mordred was agreed for to have Cornwall and Kent, by Arthur's days; after, all England, after the days of King Arthur.

CHAPTER IV

HOW BY MISADVENTURE OF AN ADDER THE BATTLE BEGAN, WHERE MORDRED WAS SLAIN, AND ARTHUR HURT TO THE DEATH

Then were they condescended that King Arthur and Sir Mordred should meet betwixt both their hosts, and every each of them should bring fourteen persons; and they came with this word unto Arthur. Then said he, "I am glad that this is done"; and so he went into the field.

And when Arthur should depart, he warned all his host that an they see any sword drawn, "Look ye come on fiercely, and slay that traitor, Sir Mordred, for I in no wise trust him."

In like wise Sir Mordred warned his host that, "An ye see any sword drawn, look that ye come on fiercely, and so slay all that ever before you standeth; for in no wise I will not trust for this treaty, for I know well my father will be avenged on me."

And so they met as their appointment was, and so they were agreed and accorded thoroughly; and wine was fetched, and they drank. Right so came an adder out of a little heath bush, and it stung a knight on the foot. And when the knight felt him stung, he looked down and saw the adder, and then he drew his sword to slay the adder, and thought of none other harm. And when the host on both parties saw that sword drawn, then they blew beams, trumpets, and horns, and shouted grimly. And so both hosts dressed them together. And King Arthur took his horse, and said, "Alas, this unhappy day!" and so rode to his party. And Sir Mordred in like wise.

And never was there seen a more dolefuller battle in no Christian land; for there was but rushing and riding, foining and striking, and many a grim word was there spoken either to other, and many a deadly stroke. But ever King Arthur rode throughout the battle of Sir Mordred many times, and did full nobly as a noble king should, and at all times he fainted never; and Sir Mordred that day put him in devoir, and in great peril. And thus they fought all the long day, and never stinted till the noble knights were laid to the cold earth; and ever they fought still till it was near night, and by that time was there an hundred thousand laid dead upon the down. Then was Arthur wood wroth out of measure, when he saw his people so slain from him. Then the King looked about him, and then was he ware, of all his host and of all his good knights, were left no more on live but two knights; that one was Sir Lucan the Butler, and his brother Sir Bedivere, and they were full sore wounded.

"Jesu mercy," said the King, "where are all my noble knights become? Alas that ever I should see this doleful day, for now," said Arthur, "I am come to mine end. But would to God that I wist where were that traitor Sir Mordred, that hath caused all this mischief."

Then was King Arthur ware where Sir Mordred leaned upon his sword among a great heap of dead men.

"Now give me my spear," said Arthur unto Sir Lucan, "for yonder I

2. **Sir Lucan the Butler**, the knight who took charge of the King's cup; an honored position at court. 14. **entreated**, treated with. 19. **condescended**, agreed. 22. **every each**, every one or each one of the two, meaning Mordred and Arthur.

51. **beams**, trumpets. 53. **dressed**, met. 61. **foining**, thrusting. 64. **battle**, ranks. 68. **in devoir**, in duty, i.e., where he belonged; he did his duty. 75. **wood wroth**, etc., beside himself.

have espied the traitor that all this woe hath wrought."

"Sir, let him be," said Sir Lucan, "for he is unhappy; and if ye pass this unhappy day ye shall be right well revenged upon him. Good lord, remember ye of your night's dream, and what the spirit of Sir Gawain told you this night, yet God of his great goodness hath preserved you hitherto. Therefore, for God's sake, my lord, leave off by this, for blessed be God ye have won the field, for here we be three on live, and with Sir Mordred is none on live; and if ye leave off now this wicked day of destiny is past."

"Tide me death, betide me life," saith the King, now I see him yonder alone he shall never escape mine hands, for at a better avail shall I never have him."

"God speed you well," said Sir Bedivere.

Then the King gat his spear in both his hands, and ran toward Sir Mordred, crying, "Traitor, now is thy death day come."

And when Sir Mordred heard Sir Arthur, he ran until him with his sword drawn in his hand. And there King Arthur smote Sir Mordred under the shield, with a foin of his spear, throughout the body, more than a fathom. And when Sir Mordred felt that he had his death wound he thrust himself with the might that he had up to the bur of King Arthur's spear. And right so he smote his father Arthur, with his sword holden in both his hands, on the side of the head, that the sword pierced the helmet and the brain-pan, and therewithal Sir Mordred fell stark dead to the earth; and the noble Arthur fell in a swoon to the earth, and there he swooned ofttimes. And Sir Lucan the Butler and Sir Bedivere ofttimes heaved him up. And so weakly they led him betwixt them both, to a little chapel not far from the seaside. And when the King was there he thought him well eased. Then heard they people cry in the field.

"Now go thou, Sir Lucan," said the King, "and do me to wit what betokens that noise in the field."

So Sir Lucan departed, for he was grievously wounded in many places. And so as he yede, he saw and hearkened by the moonlight, how that pillers and robbers were come into the field, to pill and to rob many a full noble knight of brooches, and beads, of many a good ring, and of many a rich jewel; and who that were not dead all out, there they slew them for their harness and their riches. When Sir Lucan understood this work, he came to the King as soon as he might, and told him all what he had heard and seen. "Therefore by my rede," said Sir Lucan, "it is best that we bring you to some town."

"I would it were so," said the King.

CHAPTER V

HOW KING ARTHUR COMMANDED TO CAST HIS SWORD EXCALIBUR INTO THE WATER, AND HOW HE WAS DELIVERED TO LADIES IN A BARGE

"But I may not stand, mine head works so. Ah, Sir Lancelot," said King Arthur, "this day have I sore missed thee. Alas, that ever I was against thee, for now have I my death, whereof Sir Gawain me warned in my dream."

Then Sir Lucan took up the King the one part, and Sir Bedivere the other part, and in the lifting the King swooned; and Sir Lucan fell in a swoon with the lift, that the part of his guts fell out of his body, and therewith the noble knight's heart brast.

And when the King awoke, he beheld Sir Lucan, how he lay foaming at the mouth, and part of his guts lay at his feet. "Alas," said the King, "this is to me a full heavy sight, to see this noble duke so die for my sake, for he would have holpen me, that had more need of help than I. Alas, he would not complain him, his heart was so set to help me. Now Jesu have mercy upon his soul!" Then Sir Bedivere wept for the death of his brother.

13. **on live**, alive. 17. **Tide**, befall. 36. **bur**, an excrescence or ring near the base of a spear.

58. **yede**, went. 59. **pillers**, pillagers. 70. **rede**, advice. 92. **holpen**, helped.

"Leave this mourning and weeping," said the King, "for all this will not avail me, for wit thou well an I might live myself, the death of Sir Lucan would grieve me evermore; but my time hieth fast," said the King. "Therefore," said Arthur unto Sir Bedivere, "take thou Excalibur, my good sword, and go with it to yonder water side, and when thou comest there I charge thee throw my sword in that water, and come again and tell me what thou there seest."

"My lord," said Bedivere, "your commandment shall be done, and lightly bring you word again."

So Sir Bedivere departed, and by the way he beheld that noble sword, that the pommel and the haft was all of precious stones; and then he said to himself, "If I throw this rich sword in the water, thereof shall never come good, but harm and loss." And then Sir Bedivere hid Excalibur under a tree. And so, as soon as he might, he came again unto the King, and said he had been at the water, and had thrown the sword in the water.

"What saw thou there?" said the King.

"Sir," he said, "I saw nothing but waves and winds."

"That is untruly said of thee," said the King. "Therefore go thou lightly again, and do my commandment; as thou art to me lief and dear, spare not, but throw it in."

Then Sir Bedivere returned again, and took the sword in his hand; and then him thought sin and shame to throw away that noble sword, and so eft he hid the sword, and returned again, and told to the King that he had been at the water, and done his commandment.

"What saw thou there?" said the King. "Sir," he said, "I saw nothing but the waters wap and waves wan."

"Ah, traitor untrue," said King Arthur, "now hast thou betrayed me twice. Who would have weened that, thou that hast been to me so lief and dear? And thou are named a noble knight, and would betray me for the richness of the sword. But now go again lightly, for thy long tarrying putteth me in great jeopardy of my life, for I have taken cold. And but if thou do now as I bid thee, if ever I may see thee, I shall slay thee with mine own hands; for thou wouldst for my rich sword see me dead."

Then Sir Bedivere departed, and went to the sword, and lightly took it up, and went to the water side; and there he bound the girdle about the hilts, and then he threw the sword as far into the water, as he might; and there came an arm and an hand above the water and met it, and caught it, and so shook it thrice and brandished, and then vanished away the hand with the sword in the water. So Sir Bedivere came again to the King, and told him what he saw.

"Alas," said the King, "help me hence, for I dread me I have tarried over long." Then Sir Bedivere took the King upon his back, and so went with him to that water side. And when they were at the water side, even fast by the bank hoved a little barge with many fair ladies in it, and among them all was a queen, and all they had black hoods, and all they wept and shrieked when they saw King Arthur.

"Now put me into the barge," said the King. And so he did softly; and there received him three queens with great mourning; and so they set them down, and in one of their laps King Arthur laid his head. And then that Queen said: "Ah, dear brother, why have ye tarried so long from me? Alas, this wound on your head hath caught overmuch cold."

And so then they rowed from the land, and Sir Bedivere beheld all those ladies go from him.

Then Sir Bedivere cried, "Ah, my lord Arthur, what shall become of me, now ye go from me and leave me here alone among mine enemies?"

"Comfort thyself," said the King, "and do as well as thou mayest, for in me is no trust for to trust in; for I will

6. **hieth**, hastens. 8. **Excalibur**, the magic sword given to Arthur by the Lady of the Lake. Cf. the magic sword in Grendel's cave, line 79, page 31. 34. **lightly**, quickly. 36. **lief**, beloved. 42. **eft**, again. 48. **wap**, beat. **wan**, wane.

58. **but if**, unless.

into the vale of Avilion to heal me of my grievous wound; and if thou hear never more of me, pray for my soul." But ever the queens and ladies wept and shrieked, that it was pity to hear.

And as soon as Sir Bedivere had lost the sight of the barge, he wept and wailed, and so took the forest; and so he went all that night, and in the morning he was ware, betwixt two holts hoar, of a chapel and an hermitage.

CHAPTER VI

HOW SIR BEDIVERE FOUND HIM ON THE MORROW DEAD IN AN HERMITAGE, AND HOW HE ABODE THERE WITH THE HERMIT

Then was Sir Bedivere glad, and thither he went; and when he came into the chapel, he saw where lay an hermit groveling on all four, there fast by a tomb was new graven. When the hermit saw Sir Bedivere he knew him well, for he was but little tofore Bishop of Canterbury, that Sir Mordred flemed.

"Sir," said Bedivere, "what man is there interred that ye pray so fast for?"

"Fair son," said the hermit, "I wot not verily, but by deeming. But this night, at midnight, here came a number of ladies, and brought hither a dead corpse, and prayed me to bury him; and here they offered an hundred tapers, and they gave me an hundred besants."

"Alas," said Sir Bedivere, "that was my lord King Arthur, that here lieth buried in this chapel." Then Sir Bedivere swooned; and when he awoke he prayed the hermit he might abide with him still there, to live with fasting and prayers. "For from hence will I never go," said Sir Bedivere, "by my will, but all the days of my life here to pray for my lord Arthur."

"Ye are welcome to me," said the hermit, "for I know ye better than ye ween that I do. Ye are the bold Bedivere, and the full noble duke, Sir Lucan the Butler, was your brother." Then Sir Bedivere told the hermit all as ye have heard tofore. So there bode Sir Bedivere with the hermit that was tofore Bishop of Canterbury, and there Sir Bedivere put upon him poor clothes, and served the hermit full lowly in fasting and in prayers.

Thus of Arthur I find never more written in books that be authorized, nor more of the very certainty of his death heard I never read, but thus was he led away in a ship wherein were three queens; that one was King Arthur's sister, Queen Morgan le Fay; the other was the Queen of Northgalis; the third was the Queen of the Waste Lands. Also there was Nimue, the chief lady of the lake, that had wedded Pelleas, the good knight; and this lady had done much for King Arthur, for she would never suffer Sir Pelleas to be in no place where he should be in danger of his life; and so he lived to the uttermost of his days with her in great rest. More of the death of King Arthur could I never find, but that ladies brought him to his burials; and such one was buried there, that the hermit bare witness that sometime was Bishop of Canterbury, but yet the hermit knew not in certain that he was verily the body of King Arthur; for this tale Sir Bedivere, knight of the Table Round, made it to be written.

CHAPTER VII

OF THE OPINION OF SOME MEN OF THE DEATH OF KING ARTHUR . . . . . .

Yet some men say in many parts of England that King Arthur is not dead, but had by the will of our Lord Jesu into another place; and men say that he shall come again, and he shall win the holy cross. I will not say it shall be so, but rather I will say, here in this world he changed his life. But many men say that there is written upon his tomb this verse: **Hic jacet Arthurus, Rex quondam, Rexque futurus.**

c. 1468 - c. 1470 (1485)

1. **vale of Avilion**, an island of the Blessed. The return of Excalibur to the sea divinity who gave it originally to Arthur, as well as his departure to Avalon, are both Celtic touches. 11. **holts hoar**, frost-covered woods. 19. **flemed**, put to flight. 23. **deeming**, conjecturing. 28. **besant**, a medieval gold coin so-named from Byzantium, the original name for Constantinople. Its worth was about five dollars.

55. **three queens.** All of them are fairy enchantresses who appear in the Arthurian legend. Morgain le Fay is the most famous of the three. 86. **Hic jacet**, etc., here lies Arthur, king once, and king to be.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER (1340-1400)

THE CANTERBURY TALES

Note

Though Geoffrey Chaucer belonged to the lower middle class of English medieval society, his excellent connections at the court of Edward III brought him into contact with every phase and stratum of medieval life. He served the King not only at home as Comptroller of the Petty Customs of London, but abroad on secret diplomatic missions. It was on these missions that Chaucer came in contact with the spirit of the Renaissance and he was the first English poet to embody it in his work. For while the poetry of Chaucer has a thoroughly medieval background, his interest in the psychology of the individual character is Renaissance, or modern. Thus in *The Canterbury Tales*, his greatest work, although Chaucer employed the medieval custom of making a collection of tales, his adaptation of it was new. Instead of having his pilgrims relate a series of disconnected stories, he first of all delineated their characters so clearly in the *Prologue* that they are constantly in our thoughts, and then he made the stories rise out of the situation. Noteworthy, too, are the sections of descriptive narrative connecting the stories, in which the attitude of the listeners is revealed. Even before a story is told, our interest has been aroused by the *Prologue*, which reveals the character of each individual pilgrim, not as it would seem externally according to social canons, but as the man or woman really had made his or her life through the development of internal characteristics and the influence of external conditions. Each story, therefore, has the double interest of being first a story and second a revelation of the character of the teller. Of the result, although the original plan was not completed, we are justified in saying that narrative poetry did not again so nearly approach the realm of the drama until the time of Robert Browning.

Chaucer's influence on succeeding poets has been very considerable. He was Spenser's acknowledged master, and was known and esteemed highly during the Elizabethan period. His fame has gone on increasing until he may perhaps now be ranked as second only to Shakespeare in English poetry.

The selections given here include the general *Prologue* and the Pardoner's *Prologue* and *Tale*. Both exhibit the dramatic nature of Chaucer's narrative, especially the Pardoner's *Prologue* and *Tale*, which are related after the Physician has concluded the tragic Roman story of the martyred virgin Virginia.

The text used is that of W. W. Skeat, of which the Macmillan Company have kindly allowed the use. It stands as the most scholarly edition of the many manuscripts in which Chaucer's poems were first recorded. No attempt to modernize the language has been made. If the student will read the poetry aloud, sounding the final *e*, half of the difficulties will vanish, and it is hoped that the notes will dispel the rest.

THE PROLOGUE

Whan that Aprille with his shoures soote
The droghte of Marche hath perced to the rote,
And bathed every veyne in swich licour,
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
Whan Zephirus eek with his swete breeth 5
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours y-ronne,
And smale fowles maken melodye,
That slepen al the night with open ye— 10
(So priketh hem nature in hir corages)
Than longen folk to goon on pilgrimages,
(And palmers for to seken straunge strondes)
To ferne halwes, couthe in sondry londes;
And specially, from every shires ende 15
Of Engelond, to Caunterbury they wende,
The holy blisful martir for to seke
That hem hath holpen, whan that they were seke.
Bifel that, in that seson on a day,
In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay 20
Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage
To Caunterbury with ful devout corage,

1. **shoures soote**, sweet showers. 2. **droghte**, drought. **rote**, root. 3. **swich licour**, such sap. 4. **vertu**, power. 5. **Zephirus**, the west wind. In Chaucer and Masefield (see "The West Wind," page 623) the west wind aroused far different emotions than it did in Shelley (see "Ode to the West Wind," page 489). 6. **Inspired**, breathed into. **holt**, wood. 8. **Ram**, the sign of the zodiac in which the sun is situated during the first half of April. 10. **ye**, eye. 11. **priketh**, rouses, stirs. Note the constant eagerness for travel and adventure here and in *Beowulf*, *The Pardoner's Tale* (page 167), *The Ancient Mariner* (page 261), "Atalanta's Race" (page 277) "The Highwayman" (page 313), and "The River" (page 315). **corages**, hearts. 12. **pilgrimages**. The Wife of Bath was an inveterate pilgrim, and her itinerary was typical of pilgrims at this time. See page 158, line 463. 13. **palmers**, pilgrims. 14. **ferne**, distant. **halwes**, holy places. **couthe**, known, renowned. 17. **martir**, Thomas à Becket, archbishop of Canterbury, murdered by four knights of King Henry II in 1170. He was afterwards declared a saint, and his tomb at Canterbury was a famous object of pilgrimage throughout the Middle Ages. 20. **Southwerk**, a suburb of London, on the south bank of the Thames, where the early theaters, bear-baiting rings, and other amusements were located. It was the resort of the free-living members of London's population. **Tabard**, a close-fitting and often sleeveless coat worn by knights when with the army, and later by heralds. Here it serves as the sign for an inn. 22. **corage**, heart

At night was come in-to that hostelrye
Wel nyne and twenty in a companye,
Of sondry folk, by aventure y-falle 25
In felawshipe, and pilgrims were they alle,
That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde;
The chambres and the stables weren wyde,
And wel we weren esed atte beste.
And shortly, whan the sonne was to reste,
So hadde I spoken with hem everichon, 31
That I was of hir felawshipe anon,
And made forward erly for to ryse,
To take our wey, ther as I yow devyse.
But natheles, whyl I have tyme and space, 35
Er that I ferther in this tale pace,
Me thinketh it acordaunt to resoun
To telle yow al the condicioun
Of ech of hem, so as it semed me,
And whiche they weren, and of what degree; 40
And eek in what array that they were inne:
And at a knight than wol I first biginne.
A KNIGHT ther was, and that a worthy man, Knight
That fro the tyme that he first bigan
To ryden out, he loved chivalrye, 45
Trouthe and honour, fredom and curteisye.
Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,
And therto hadde he riden (no man ferre)
As wel in Cristendom as hethenesse,
And ever honoured for his worthinesse.

25-26. **by aventure . . . felawshipe,** "by chance gathered together in a company." 29. **weren esed atte beste,** "were well cared for." 30. **to reste,** set. 33. **forward,** agreement. 34. **yow devyse,** tell you. 38. **condicioun,** circumstances. 40. **degree,** rank. Masters has the same desire to "size up" people in *Spoon River Anthology*. Compare his character descriptions with Chaucer's. 45. **ryden out,** go abroad on expeditions of war. 47. **his lordes werre,** the war of his feudal overlord. 48. **ferre,** further. 49. **Cristendom, hethenesse.** In the fourteenth century many knightly Orders took part in crusades against the Turks in Lithuania and Poland, as well as in the Holy Land: Pierre de Lusignan, king of Cyprus, captured Alexandria in 1365 and shortly thereafter other cities under Turkish control, such as Tripoli, Layas, and Satalia; the Teutonic knights, about the same time, were warring in Prussia, Lithuania, and Russia; while the Spaniards were engaged in combating the Moors in Spain and on the adjacent coast of Africa.

At Alisaundre he was, whan it was wonne; 51
Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne
Aboven alle naciouns in Pruce.
In Lettow hadde he reysed and in Ruce,
No Cristen man so ofte of his degree. 55
In Gernade at the sege eek hadde he be
Of Algezir and riden in Belmarye.
At Lyeys was he, and at Satalye,
Whan they were wonne; and in the Grete See
At many a noble aryve hadde he be. 60
At mortal batailles hadde he been fiftene,
And foughten for our feith at Tramissene
In listes thryes, and ay slayn his fo.
This ilke worthy knight had been also
Somtyme with the lord of Palatye, 65
Ageyn another hethen in Turkye:
And evermore he hadde a sovereyn prys.
And though that he were worthy, he was wys,
And of his port as meke as is a mayde.
He never yet no vileinye ne sayde 70
In al his lyf, un-to no maner wight.
He was a verray parfit gentil knight.
But for to tellen yow of his array,
His hors were gode, but he was nat gay.
Of fustian he wered a gipoun 75
Al bismotered with his habergeoun;
For he was late y-come from his viage,

51. **Alisaundre.** See note on 49. 53. **naciouns in Pruce.** When fighting in Prussia, the rank of the Knight was such that he sat at the head of the table at which all the orders of knighthood engaged in the war were seated according to the countries from which they came. 54. **Lettow,** Lithuania. **reysed,** waged war. **Ruce,** Russia. 55. **degree,** rank. 56. **Gernade,** Granada. **eek,** also. 57. **Algezir.** Algeciras was captured from the Moors in 1344. **Belmarye,** a small Moorish kingdom in northern Africa. 58. **Lyeys,** an Armenian city captured from the Turks by Pierre de Lusignan in 1367. **Satalye,** a seaport town on the southern coast of Asia Minor, now known as Adalia. Pierre de Lusignan captured it in 1352. 59. **wonne,** conquered. **Grete See,** the Mediterranean Sea. 60. **aryve,** disembarkation of troops. 62. **Tramissene,** a small Moorish kingdom in Africa. 63. **listes thryes.** The Knight had three times fought in the lists on challenge of his heathen enemies. This custom was common during the Crusades. 64. **ilke,** same. 65. **Somtyme,** at one time. **Palatye,** one of the overlordships established by the Christian knights in Anatolia, after they had captured it from the Turks. 67. **sovereyn prys,** great renown. 68. **worthy,** distinguished. **wys,** modest, discreet. 69. **port,** bearing. 70. **vileinye,** evil remarks. 71. **wight,** person. 72. **verray parfit gentil knight,** a truly perfect, noble knight. 75. **fustian,** a coarse, heavy cotton cloth. **gipoun,** a close-fitting doublet. 76. **bismotered,** spotted, soiled. **habergeoun,** coat-of-mail.

And wente for to doon his pilgrimage.
With him ther was his sone, a yong SQUYER, **Squyer**
A lovyere, and a lusty bacheler, 80
With lokkes crulle, as they were leyd in presse.
Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse.
Of his stature he was of evene lengthe,
And wonderly deliver, and greet of strengthe.
And he had been somtyme in chivachye,
In Flaundres, in Artoys, and Picardye,
And born him wel, as of so litel space, 87
In hope to stonden in his lady grace.
Embrouded was he, as it were a mede
Al ful of fresshe floures, whyte and rede.
Singinge he was, or floytinge, al the day;
He was as fresh as is the month of May.
Short was his goune, with sleves longe and wyde.
Wel coude he sitte on hors, and faire ryde.
He coude songes make and wel endyte,
Juste and eek daunce, and wel purtreye and wryte. 96
So hote he lovede that by nightertale
He sleep namore than dooth a nightingale.
Curteys he was, lowly and servisable,
And carf biforn his fader at the table. 100
A YEMAN hadde he, and servaunts namo **Yeman**
At that tyme, for him liste ryde so;
And he was clad in cote and hood of grene;
A sheef of pecok-arwes brighte and kene
Under his belt he bar ful thriftily; 105
(Wel coude he dresse his takel yemanly:
His arwes drouped noght with fetheres lowe),
And in his hand he bar a mighty bowe.
A not-heed hadde he, with a broun visage.
Of wode-craft wel coude he all the usage. 110
Upon his arm he bar a gay bracer,
And by his syde a swerd and a bokeler,
And on that other syde a gay daggere,
Harneised wel, and sharp as point of spere;
A Cristofre on his brest of silver shene.
An horn he bar, the bawdrik was of grene; 116
A forster was he, soothly, as I gesse.
Ther was also a Nonne, a PRIORESSE,
That of hir smyling was ful simple and coy; **Prioresse**
Hir gretteste ooth was but by sëynt Loy; 120
And she was cleped madame Eglentyne.
Ful wel she song the service divyne,
Entunéd in hir nose ful semely;
And Frensh she spak ful faire and fetisly,
After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,
For Frensh of Paris was to hir unknowe. 126
At mete wel y-taught was she with-alle;
She leet no morsel from hir lippes falle,
Ne wette hir fingres in hir sauce depe.
Wel coude she carie a morsel, and wel kepe, 130
That no drope ne fille up-on hir brest.
In curteisye was set ful muche hir lest.
Hir over lippe wyped she so clene
That in hir coppe was no ferthing sene
Of grece, whan she dronken hadde hir draughte. 135

80. **lovyere**, lover. **bacheler**, aspirant to knighthood. 81. **crulle**, curled. **in presse**, in a mold. 83. **evene lengthe**, medium height. 84. **deliver**, nimble. 85. **chivachye**, a small cavalry expedition or raid. 86. **In Flaundres.** Many generations of English youths have received their war-training on the fields of Flanders and of northern France. Chaucer was made a prisoner near Rheims in 1359. See McCrae's "In Flanders Fields" (page 617). 87. **space**, time. 91. **floytinge**, playing the flute. 95. **endyte.** He knew how to write not only poetry, but the music to accompany it. 96. **Juste**, just. 97. **nightertale**, nighttime. 100. **carf**, etc., one of the duties of a squire. 101. **Yeman**, yeoman, a servant who ranked above a groom. 102. **him liste**, it pleased him. 106. **Wel coude**, etc., "he knew how to take care of his equipment."

107. **fetheres lowe.** If the feathers of the arrow were short, the arrow would not fly straight. 109. **not-heed**, a closely-cropped head. 111. **bracer**, a long leather glove which extended well up the forearm to protect the left arm from the friction of the bow-string upon the sleeve. 112. **bokeler**, a small shield. 114. **Harneised wel**, well made or equipped. 115. **Cristofre.** St. Christopher was the patron saint of the lower classes in medieval England. The yeoman was wearing a silver image of his saint. **shene**, bright. 116. **bawdrik**, a belt hung from one shoulder, passing under the arm on the other side of the body. 120. **sëynt Loy**, St. Eligius, the patron saint of goldsmiths. The oath of the Prioress was a very slight one. 121. **cleped**, named. 123. **Entunéd**, intoned. 124. **fetisly**, well, clearly. 125. **Bowe.** The Prioress had evidently been educated at the Benedictine convent at Stratford-le-Bow, and had never heard Parisian French. 129. **Ne wette hir fingres.** Forks were then unknown. 132. **lest**, delight. 134. **ferthing**, a small bit. The meaning is derived from the original meaning of *farthing*, as a fourth of anything.

Ful semely after hir mete she raughte,
And sikerly she was of greet disport,
And ful plesaunt, and amiable of port,
And peyned hir to countrefete chere
Of court, and been estatlich of manere,
And to ben holden digne of reverence. 141
But, for to speken of hir conscience,
She was so charitable and so pitous,
She wolde wepe if that she sawe a mous
Caught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde. 145
Of smale houndes had she, that she fedde
With rosted flesh, or milk and wastel-breed.
But sore weep she if oon of hem were deed,
Or if men smoot it with a yerde smerte:
And al was conscience and tendre herte.
Ful semely hir wimpel pinched was; 151
Hir nose tretys; hir eyen greye as glas;
Hir mouth ful smal, and ther-to softe and reed;
But sikerly she hadde a fair forheed;
It was almost a spanne brood, I trowe;
For, hardily, she was nat undergrowe.
Ful fetis was hir cloke, as I was war. 157
Of smal coral aboute hir arm she bar
A peire of bedes gauded al with grene;
And ther-on heng a broche of gold ful shene, 160
On which there was first write a crowned A,
And after, *Amor vincit omnia.*
Another NONNE with hir hadde she,
That was hir chapeleyne, and PREESTES THREE. **3 Preestes**
A MONK ther was, a fair for the maistrye, **Monk**
An out-rydere, that lovede venerye; 166

136. **raughte**, reached. 137. **disport**, good nature, sport. 138. **port**, disposition. 139. **peyned hir**, took pains to imitate court manners. **chere**, appearance. 141. **digne**, worthy. 143. **pitous**, full of pity. 147. **wastel-breed**, bread made of the best flour, and like cake. 149. **smoot**, smote. **yerde**, stick. **smerte**, sharply. 151. **wimpel**, a covering, usually of linen, which concealed the neck, the chin, and the cheeks. It is worn now chiefly by nuns. **pinched**, plaited. 152. **tretys**, long, straight, well shaped. 155. **spanne**, about nine inches, or the distance between the tip of the extended thumb and the extended little finger. 156. **hardily**, truly. 157. **fetis**, of elegant workmanship. 159. **bedes**, a set of beads to be used in prayer; hence a rosary. **gauded**, The large beads were the gauds, or paternosters. 160. **broche**, a breastpin or ornamental clasp. 161. **crowned A**, representing "amor," charity, the greatest of the Christian virtues. The A was surmounted, therefore, by a crown. 162. **Amor vincit omnia**, "love conquers all things," Vergil, Eclogue x, 69. Compare Chaucer's humor of description with that of Hardy in *Satires of Circumstance* (page 326). 165. **a fair**, etc., a good one in point of superiority. 166. **out-rydere**, that monk in a monastery who supervised the land. **venerye**, hunting.

A manly man, to been an abbot able.
Ful many a deyntee hors hadde he in stable:
And whan he rood men mighte his brydel here
Ginglen in a whistling wind as clere, 170
And eek as loude as dooth the chapel-belle,
Ther as this lord was keper of the celle.
The reule of seint Maure or of seint Beneit,
By-cause that it was old and som-del streit,
This ilke monk leet olde thinges pace, 175
And held after the newe world the space.
He yaf nat of that text a pulled hen,
That seith that hunters been nat holy men;
Ne that a monk, whan he is cloisterlees,
Is lykned til a fish that is waterlees; 180
This is to seyn, a monk out of his cloistre.
But thilke text held he nat worth an oistre.
And I seyde his opinioun was good.
What sholde he studie, and make himselven wood,
Upon a book in cloistre alwey to poure,
Or swinken with his handes, and laboure, 186
As Austin bit? How shal the world be served?
Lat Austin have his swink to him reserved.
Therfore he was a pricasour aright;
Grehoundes he hadde, as swifte as fowel in flight; 190
Of priking and of hunting for the hare
Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.
I seigh his sleves purfiléd at the hond

168. **deyntee**, valuable, fine. 172. **keper of the celle**, prior of a small monastery, usually subordinate to a large one. 173. **seint Maure, seint Beneit.** St. Maur was a disciple of St. Benedict, who founded the Benedictine order, which is the oldest monastic order of the Catholic church. St. Benedict died in 542 A.D. Manual labor was one of the chief duties of the monks, as it was also of the Augustinian friars. 174. **som-del streit**, somewhat strict. 175. **pace**, pass by. 176. **space**, course. 184. **wood**, crazy. 186. **swinken**, work. 187. **Austin**, St. Augustine, bishop of Hippo in the fifth century, from whose writings the Augustinian Canons and Friars drew their rule. **bit**, commands. **How shal**, etc., the implication being that there are many ways of helping the world. 189. **pricasour**, hard rider. 192. **lust**, pleasure. 193. **purfiléd**, edged.

With grys, and that the fyneste of a lond;
And for to festne his hood under his chin, 195
He hadde of gold y-wroght a curious pin:
A love-knotte in the gretter ende ther was.
His heed was balled, that shoon as any glas,
And eek his face, as he had been anoint.
He was a lord ful fat and in good point; 200
His eyen stepe, and rollinge in his heed,
That stemed as a forneys of a leed;
His botes souple, his hors in greet estat.
Now certeinly he was a fair prelat;
He was nat pale as a for-pyned goost. 205
A fat swan loved he best of any roost.
His palfrey was as broun as is a berye.
A FRERE ther was, a wantown and a merye, **Frere**
A limitour, a ful solempne man.
In alle the ordres foure is noon that can
So muche of daliaunce and fair langage. 211
He hadde maad ful many a mariage
Of yonge wommen at his owne cost.
Un-to his ordre he was a noble post.
Ful wel biloved and famulier was he 215
With frankeleyns over-al in his contree,
And eek with worthy wommen of the toun:
For he had power of confessioun,
As seyde him-self, more than a curat,
For of his ordre he was licentiat. 220
Ful swetely herde he confessioun,
And plesaunt was his absolucioun;
He was an esy man to yeve penaunce
Ther as he wiste to han a good pitaunce;
For unto a povre ordre for to yive 225
Is signe that a man is well y-shrive;
For if he yaf, he dorste make avaunt,
He wiste that a man was repentaunt.
For many a man so hard is of his herte,
He may nat wepe al-thogh him sore smerte. 230
Therfore, in stede of weping and preyeres,
Men moot yeve silver to the povre freres.
His tipet was ay farsed ful of knyves
And pinnes, for to yeven faire wyves.
And certeinly he hadde a mery note; 235
Wel coude he singe and pleyen on a rote.
Of yeddinges he bar utterly the prys.
His nekke whyt was as the flour-de-lys;
Ther-to he strong was as a champioun.
He knew the tavernes wel in every toun, 240
And everich hostiler and tappestere
Bet than a lazar or a beggestere;
For un-to swich a worthy man as he
Acorded nat, as by his facultee,
To have with seke lazars aqueyntaunce.
It is nat honest, it may nat avaunce 246
For to delen with no swich poraille,
But al with riche and sellers of vitaille.
And over-al, ther as profit sholde aryse,
Curteys he was, and lowly of servyse. 250
Ther nas no man no-wher so vertuous.
He was the beste beggere in his hous;
For thogh a widwe hadde noght a sho,
So plesaunt was his *In principio*,
Yet wolde he have a ferthing, er he wente. 255
His purchas was wel bettre than his rente.
And rage he coude as it were right a whelpe.
In love-dayes ther coude he muchel helpe.
For there he was nat lyk a cloisterer,
With a thredbar cope, as is a povre scoler, 260

194. **grys**, probably very costly gray or black squirrel fur. 200. **point**, condition. 201. **stepe**, popping. 202. **forneys of a leed**, fire under a caldron. 205. **for-pyned**, tortured, and hence emaciated. 208. **Frere**. The four chief Orders of mendicant friars were founded in general in the thirteenth century, and spread throughout Europe. Poverty was one of their perpetual vows, and they lived by begging their way. The four Orders were: the Dominicans, the Franciscans, the Carmelites, and the Augustinians. **wantown**, lively. 209. **limitour**, a friar to whom a certain district in the community was assigned for begging purposes. **solempne**, important. 210. **can**, knows. 216. **frankeleyns**, well-to-do farmers. 220. **was licentiat**. He had a special license from the pope to hear confession anywhere without the consent of the local authorities. 224. **pitaunce**, pittance, an extra allowance given to mendicant friars. 227. **avaunt**, guarantee.

230. **al-thogh him sore smerte**, although it pain him sorely. 233. **tipet**, a hood in which, for convenience sake, the friar seems to have carried gifts for his women friends. **farsed**, stuffed. 236. **rote**, fiddle. 237. **yeddinges**, ballads or songs relating some old romance. 241. **tappestere**, barmaid. 242. **lazar**, leper. **beggestere**, female beggar. 244. **facultee**, ability, position. 246. **honest**, creditable. 247. **poraille**, poor trash. 248. **vitaille**, food. 254. **In principio**, the beginning of the Gospel according to John, "In the beginning was the Word," a favorite text for the friars. 256. **His purchas**, etc., "what he got from begging exceeded his regular income." 257. **And rage**, etc., "and he knew how to play about like a puppy." 258. **love-dayes**, in mediaeval times, days on which differences of opinion could be settled out of court through the intermediation of the clergy. They were called "dies amoris." 260. **cope**, a priest's cloak, semicircular in shape.

But he was lyk a maister or a pope.
Of double worsted was his semi-cope,
That rounded as a belle, out of the presse.
Somwhat he lipsed, for his wantownesse,
To make his English swete up-on his tonge; 265
And in his harping, whan that he had songe,
His eyen twinkled in his heed aright,
As doon the sterres in the frosty night.
This worthy limitour was cleped Huberd. 269

A MARCHANT was ther with a forked berd, **Marchant**
In mottelee, and hye on horse he sat,
Up-on his heed a Flaundrish bever hat;
His botes clasped faire and fetisly.
His resons he spak ful solempnely,
Souninge alway th'encrees of his winning. 275
He wolde the see were kept for any thing
Bitwixe Middelburgh and Orewelle.
Wel coude he in eschaunge sheeldes selle.
This worthy man ful wel his wit bisette;
Ther wiste no wight that he was in dette, 280
So estatly was he of his governaunce,
With his bargaynes, and with his chevisaunce.
For sothe he was a worthy man withalle,
But sooth to seyn, I noot how men him calle. **Clerk**

A CLERK ther was of Oxenford also,
That un-to logik hadde longe y-go. 286
As lene was his hors as is a rake,
And he nas nat right fat, I undertake;
But loked holwe, and ther-to soberly.
Ful thredbar was his overest courtepy;
For he had geten him yet no benefyce,
Ne was so worldly for to have offyce. 292
For him was lever have at his beddes heed
Twenty bokes, clad in blak or reed,
Of Aristotle and his philosophye, 295
Than robes riche, or fithele, or gay sautrye.
But al be that he was a philosophre,
Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre;
But al that he mighte of his freendes hente,
On bokes and on lerninge he it spente,
And bisily gan for the soules preye 301
Of hem that yaf him wher-with to scoleye.
Of studie took he most cure and most hede.
Noght o word spak he more than was nede,
And that was seyd in forme and reverence, 305
And short and quik, and ful of hy sentence.
Souninge in moral vertu was his speche,
And gladly wolde he learne, and gladly teche.

A SERGEANT OF THE LAWE, war and wys, **Man of Lawe**
That often hadde been at the parvys, 310
Ther was also, ful riche of excellence.
Discreet he was, and of greet reverence:
He semed swich, his wordes weren so wyse.
Justyce he was full often in assyse,
By patente and by pleyn commissioun;
For his science and for his heigh renoun 316
Of fees and robes hadde he many oon.
So greet a purchasour was no-wher noon.
Al was fee simple to him in effect,

264. **wantownesse**, mannerism. 271. **mottelee**, mixed-colored cloth. 275. **Souninge**, etc., harmonizing with, or conducing to, the increase of his profit. 276. **kept for any thing**, guarded at any cost. 277. **Middelburgh and Orewelle.** Between 1384-1388 the wool-staple or market was settled at Middleburgh, a port in Holland, just opposite Harwich, near which the Orwell River empties into the sea. The merchant wanted protection for the wool trade. 278. **in eschaunge sheeldes selle.** Crowns were called shields because one side had a shield on it. They were valued at 3s 4d. The merchant knew how to make money on the rate of exchange. 279. **wit bisette**, used his wits to the best advantage. 281. **governaunce**, the ordering of his business. 282. **chevisaunce**, an agreement or contract for borrowing money on credit; really a form of note. 285. **Clerk**, a scholar at the university who is preparing himself for priestly orders or who is in orders. 286. **y-go**, gone. 290. **courtepy**, outermost short cloak.

291. **benefyce**, an ecclesiastical preferment; here probably a perpetual curacy, the duties of which were slight and the remuneration large. 292. **offyce**, secular employment, generally in law. 296. **sautrye**, psaltery or zither. 297. **al be**, although. **philosophre.** Medieval philosophy included alchemy and the search for the philosophers' stone, by which it was believed that all metals could be turned into gold. The Clerk did not practice alchemy. 299. **hente**, get. 302. **scoleye**, study. 303. **cure**, care. 306. **sentence**, moral import. 307. **Souninge in**, conducive to. 309. **Sergeant of the Lawe**, any lawyer acting for the king in a law court; like our district attorney. **war**, cautious. 310. **parvys**, the portico of St. Paul's in London, where the lawyers used to gather. 314. **Justyce**, etc., justice of the circuit court sent by the crown to certain parts of England. 315. **patente**, official documents. **pleyn**, full. 318. **purchasour**, conveyancer of property. 319. **fee simple**, complete transfer and not in fee tail, i.e., with restrictions applied to the transfer.

His purchasing mighte nat been infect.
No-wher so bisy a man as he ther nas, 321
And yet he semed bisier than he was.
In termes hadde he caas and domes alle,
That from the tyme of king William were falle.
Therto he coude endyte, and make a thing, 325
Ther coude no wight pinche at his wryting;
And every statut coude he pleyn by rote.
He rood but hoomly in a medlee cote,
Girt with a ceint of silk, with barres smale;
Of his array telle I no lenger tale. 330

Frankeleyn

A FRANKELEYN was in his companye;
Whyt was his berd as is the dayesye.
Of his complexioun he was sangwyn.
Wel loved he by the morwe a sop in wyn.
To liven in delyt was ever his wone, 335
For he was Epicurus owne sone,
That heeld opinioun that pleyn delyt
Was verraily felicitee parfyt.
An housholdere and that a greet, was he;
Seint Julian he was in his contree. 340
His breed, his ale, was alwey after oon;
A bettre envyned man was no-wher noon.
With-oute bake mete was never his hous,
Of fish and flesh, and that so plentevous
It snewed in his hous of mete and drinke, 345
Of alle deyntees that men coude thinke.
After the sondry sesons of the yeer,
So chaunged he his mete and his soper.
Ful many a fat partrich hadde he in mewe,
And many a breem and many a luce in stewe. 350
Wo was his cook but-if his sauce were
Poynaunt and sharp, and redy al his gere.
His table dormant in his halle alway
Stood redy covered al the longe day.
At sessiouns ther was he lord and sire;
Ful ofte tyme he was knight of the shire. 356
An anlas and a gipser al of silk
Heng at his girdel, whyt as morne milk.
A shirreve hadde he been, and a countour; 359
Was no-wher such a worthy vavasour.

Haberdassher, Carpenter, etc.

An HABERDASSHER and a CARPENTER,
A WEBBE, a DYERE, and a TAPICER,
Were with us eek, clothed in o liveree,
Of a solempne and greet fraternitee.
Ful fresh and newe hir gere apyked was;
Hir knyves were y-chaped noght with bras, 366
But al with silver, wroght ful clene and weel,
Hir girdles and hir pouches every-deel.
Wel semed ech of hem a fair burgeys,
To sitten in a yeldhalle on a deys. 370
Everich, for the wisdom that he can,
Was shaply for to been an alderman.
For catel hadde they y-nogh and rente,
And eek hir wyves wolde it wel assente;
And elles certein were they to blame. 375
It is ful fair to been y-clept *ma dame*,

320. **infect**, invalid. 323. **In termes**, etc., "he knew the legal cases and decisions and could express them in proper legal terms." 324. **king William**, William the Conqueror. 325. **endyte**, draw up. **thing**, agreement. 327. **pleyn**, completely. 328. **hoomly**, simply. **medlee**, motley. 329. **ceint**, belt. **barres**, belt-holes for the tongue to pass through. 331. **Frankeleyn**, a wealthy householder or farmer. 333. **sangwyn.** The medieval physicians believed that four "humors" governed the body —cold, hot, moist, and dry—and that in each man were four complexions—sanguine, choleric, phlegmatic, and melancholic. The dominant complexion depended on whether blood, bile, phlegm, or black bile predominated in a man, ascended to his brain, and controlled his mind. 334. **by the morwe**, in the morning. **sop in wyn**, bread dipped in wine. 336. **Epicurus** (342?-270 B.C.), a Greek philosopher who believed that pleasure is the highest good. 340. **Seint Julian**, the patron saint of hospitality. 341. **after oon**, kept up to par. 342. **envyned**, provided with a good cellar of wine. 348. **soper**, supper. 349. **mewe**, coop.

350. **many a breem**, etc., "many a bream and a pike in his fishpond." 351. **but-if**, unless. 353. **dormant**, fixed, a proof of hospitality. At that time most tables were merely boards thrown across sawhorses and easily removable. 355. **sessiouns**, meetings of the justices of the peace. 356. **knight of the shire**, a distinct honor, since this member of parliament represented the entire shire, and not merely one of its constituent boroughs or counties. Chaucer represented the shire of Kent in 1386. 357. **anlas**, a short, two-edged knife. **gipser**, a pouch usually employed in hawking, but here merely a money pouch. 359. **shirreve**, governor of a county. **countour**, a public accountant or auditor. 360. **vavasour**, a vassal to an overlord, a man of the middle class. 361. **Haberdassher**, either a seller of notions, or else of hats. 362. **Webbe**, weaver. **Tapicer**, an upholsterer. 363. **o**, one. **liveree.** Certain guilds, or fraternities (line 364), adopted a common dress. 365. **gere**, clothing. **apyked**, cleaned. 366. **y-chaped**, tipped at the end of the sheath. Since they used silver they were very superior people. 370. **To sitten**, etc., "to sit in a guildhall on a platform." 371. **can**, knew. 372. **alderman**, the head of a guild. 373. **For catel**, etc., "for they had enough property and income."

And goon to vigilyës al bifore,
And have a mantel royalliche y-bore.
A Cook they hadde with hem for the nones, **Cook**
To boille the chiknes with the mary-bones, 380
And poudre-marchant tart, and galingale.
Wel coude he knowe a draughte of London ale.
He coude roste, and sethe, and broille, and frye,
Maken mortreux, and wel bake a pye.
But greet harm was it, as it thoughte me, 385
That on his shine a mormal hadde he;
For blankmanger, that made he with the beste.
A Shipman was ther, woning fer by weste; **Shipman**
For aught I woot, he was of Dertemouthe.
He rood up-on a rouncy as he couthe, 390
In a gowne of falding to the knee.
A daggere hanging on a laas hadde he
Aboute his nekke under his arm adoun.
The hote somer had maad his hewe al broun;
And, certeinly, he was a good felawe. 395
Ful many a draughte of wyn had he y-drawe
From Burdeux-ward, whyl that the chapman sleep.
Of nyce conscience took he no keep.
If that he faught, and hadde the hyer hond,
By water he sente hem hoom to every lond. 400
But of his craft to rekene wel his tydes,
His stremes and his daungers him bisydes,
His herberwe and his mone, his lodemenage,
Ther nas noon swich from Hulle to Cartage.
Hardy he was, and wys to undertake; 405
With many a tempest hadde his berd been shake.
He knew wel alle the havenes, as they were,
From Gootlond to the cape of Finistere,
And every cryke in Britayne and in Spayne;
His barge y-cleped was the Maudelayne. 410
With us ther was a Doctour of Phisyk, **Doctour**
In all this world ne was ther noon him lyk
To speke of phisik and of surgerye,
For he was grounded in astronomye.
He kepte his pacient a ful greet del 415
In houres, by his magik naturel.
Wel coude he fortunen the ascendent
Of his images for his pacient.
He knew the cause of everich maladye,
Were it of hoot, or cold, or moiste, or drye, 420
And where engendred, and of what humour;
He was a verrey parfit practisour.
The cause y-knowe, and of his harm the rote,
Anon he yaf the seke man his bote.
Ful redy hadde he his apothecaries, 425
To sende him drogges, and his letuaries,
For ech of hem made other for to winne;
Hir frendschipe nas nat newe to biginne.
Wel knew he th'olde Esculapius,

377. **vigilyës.** Watch-nights, or the evenings of church festivals, were celebrated by meetings in the churchyards and churches. Frequently quarrels occurred as to precedence, especially when the ladies went up to lay their offerings on the altar. 379. **for the nones,** for the occasion. 380. **mary-bones,** marrow bones. 381. **poudre-marchant,** a bitter flavoring powder. **galingale,** a spice made from the root of the sweet cyprus. 384. **mortreux,** a very thick soup made either of pounded meat or fish. 386. **mormal,** a running sore. 387. **blankmanger,** a timbale made of chicken, rice, sugar, and almonds. 388. **woning,** living. 389. **Dertemouthe,** Dartmouth, once a prosperous port of Devonshire. 390. **rouncy,** a nag. **as he couthe,** "as best he knew how." 391. **falding.** coarse cloth. 392. **laas,** cord. 397. **chapman,** merchant or supercargo. The crew apparently refreshed themselves from the cargo. 398. **nyce,** sensitive. 399. **hyer,** upper. 400. **By water,** etc., he made them "walk the plank."

402. **stremes,** currents. 403. **herberwe,** harbor. **lode-menage,** pilotage. 404. **Cartage,** Carthage. 416. **In houres.** He took care to get his patient under the proper astrological influences at certain hours. Medieval medicine was saturated with astrology. 417. **Wel coude . . . pacient,** "well did he know how to choose a fortunate moment for putting under the proper zodiacal influence images to be used for curing his patient." The medieval physicians made images as charms to cure their patients, either by the substance from which the image was made or by the planetary influence to which it was subjected. The ascendant was the point of the zodiac rising above the horizon at any given moment. 421. **humour.** See note on line 333. 424. **bote,** remedy. 425. **apothecaries.** The medieval physicians and apothecaries worked closely together. 426. **letuaries,** drugs mixed in a sirup or paste. 429. **Esculapius,** Aesculapius, the son of Apollo, and reputed the father of medicine. The others (lines 430-434) were famous physicians and scholars of antiquity and of medieval times. The last-named, an Englishman, was almost a contemporary of Chaucer's.

And Deiscorides, and eek Rufus; 430
Old Ypocras, Haly, and Galien;
Serapion, Razis, and Avicen;
Averrois, Damascien, and Constantyn;
Bernard, and Gatesden, and Gilbertyn.
Of his diete mesurable was he, 435
For it was of no superfluitee,
But of greet norissing and digestible.
His studie was but litel on the Bible.
In sangwin and in pers he clad was al,
Lyned with taffata and with sendal; 440
And yet he was but esy of dispence;
He kepte that he wan in pestilence.
For gold in phisik is a cordial,
Therfore he lovede gold in special. 444

A good WYF was ther of bisyde BATHE, **Wyf of Bathe**
But she was som-del deef, and that was scathe.
Of clooth-making she hadde swiche an haunt
She passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt,
In al the parisshe wyf ne was ther noon
That to th' offring bifore hir sholde goon; 450
And if ther dide, certeyn, so wrooth was she
That she was out of alle charitee.
Hir coverchiefs ful fyne were of ground,
I dorste swere they weyeden ten pound
That on a Sonday were upon hir heed.
Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed, 456
Ful streite y-teyd, and shoos ful moiste and newe.
Bold was hir face, and fair, and reed of hewe.
She was a worthy womman al hir lyve,
Housbondes at chirche-dore she hadde fyve, 460
Withouten other companye in youthe;
But therof nedeth nat to speke as nouthe.
And thryes hadde she been at Jerusalem;
She hadde passed many a straunge streem;
At Rome she hadde been, and at Boloigne, 465
In Galice at seint Jame, and at Coloigne.
She coude muche of wandring by the weye:
Gat-tothed was she, soothly for to seye.
Up-on an amblere esily she sat,
Y-wimpled wel, and on hir heed an hat 470
As brood as is a bokeler or a targe;
A foot-mantel aboute hir hipes large,
And on hir feet a paire of spores sharpe.
In felawschip wel coude she laughe and carpe.
Of remedyes of love she knew perchaunce, 475
For she coude of that art the olde daunce.

A good man was ther of religioun,
And was a povre PERSOUN of a toun;
But riche he was of holy thoght and werk. **Persoun**
He was also a lerned man, a clerk, 480
That Cristes gospel trewely wolde preche;
His parisshens devoutly wolde he teche.
Benigne he was, and wonder diligent,
And in adversitee full pacient;
And swich he was y-preved ofte sythes.
Ful looth were him to cursen for his tythes, 486
But rather wolde he yeven, out of doute,
Un-to his povre parisshens aboute
Of his offring and eek of his substaunce.
He coude in litel thing han suffisaunce.
Wyd was his parisshe, and houses fer a-sonder, 491
But he ne lafte nat, for reyn ne thonder,

439. **In sangwin**, etc., "in red and blue-gray he was dressed." 440. **taffata**, thin silk. **sendal**, a silk used for lining. 441. **but esy of dispence**, economical. 446. **som-del**, somewhat. **scathe**, a shame. 447. **haunt**, skill. 448. **passed**, surpassed. **Ypres and of Gaunt**. At this time the Flemings and the English were rivals in making cloth. 450. **bifore hir**. See note on line 377. 453. **of ground**, finely woven. 457. **streite y-teyd**, snugly fastened. **moiste**, supple, as would not be true of old, dry leather. 460. **chirche-dore**. Many couples were married at the church door, and then entered the church for Mass. 461. **Withouten**, besides. 462. **as nouthe**, now.

464. **straunge streem**. She had made all the popular pilgrimages. 465. **Boloigne** (Boulogne), where there was a famous image of the Virgin Mary. 466. **Galice** (Galicia), where the body of St. James was supposed to be buried at Compostella. **Coloigne** (Cologne), where the Three Wise Men were supposed to be buried. 468. **Gat-tothed**, with teeth far apart. This was considered to be a sign of an affectionate nature. 471. **targe**, a large shield. 472. **foot-mantel**, a short overskirt, worn to protect the dress. 474. **carpe**, talk. 476. **daunce**, custom. 478. **Persoun**, parson, a member of the secular clergy as distinguished from the clerical orders. 482. **parisshens**, parishioners. 485. **sythes**, times. 486. **tythes**. As he lived on a part of the offerings of his church, he would have to scold the congregation if they were too small to sustain him. 492. **ne lafte nat**, did not stop.

In siknes nor in meschief to visyte
The ferreste in his parisshe, muche and lyte,
Up-on his feet, and in his hand a staf. 495
This noble ensample to his sheep he yaf,
That first he wroghte, and afterward he taughte;
Out of the gospel he tho wordes caughte;
And this figure he added eek ther-to,
That if gold ruste what shal iren do? 500
For if a preest be foul, on whom we truste,
No wonder is a lewed man to ruste;
And shame it is, if a preest take keep,
A shiten shepherde and a clene sheep.
Wel oghte a preest ensample for to yive, 505
By his clennesse, how that his sheep shold live.
He sette nat his benefice to hyre,
And leet his sheep encombred in the myre,
And ran to London, un-to sëynt Poules,
To seken him a chaunterie for soules, 510
Or with a bretherhed to been withholde;
But dwelte at hoom, and kepte wel his folde,
So that the wolf ne made it nat miscarie;
He was a shepherde and no mercenarie.
And though he holy were and vertuous,
He was to sinful man nat despitous, 516
Ne of his speche daungerous ne digne,
But in his teching discreet and benigne.
To drawen folk to heven by fairnesse,
By good ensample, was his bisnesse: 520
But it were any persone obstinat,
What-so he were, of heigh or lowe estat,
Him wolde he snibben sharply for the nones.
A bettre preest I trowe that nowher noon is.
He wayted after no pompe and reverence, 525
Ne maked him a spyced conscience,

But Cristes lore, and his apostles twelve,
He taughte, and first he folwed it himselve.
With him ther was a PLOWMAN, was his brother, **Plowman**
That hadde y-lad of dong ful many a fother, 530
A trewe swinker and a good was he,
Livinge in pees and parfit charitee.
God loved he best with al his hole herte
At alle tymes, thogh him gamed or smerte,
And thanne his neighebour right as himselve. 535
He wolde thresshe, and ther-to dyke and delve,
For Cristes sake, for every povre wight,
Withouten hyre, if it lay in his might.
His tythes payed he ful faire and wel,
Bothe of his propre swink and his catel.
In a tabard he rood upon a mere. 541
Ther was also a Reve and a Millere,
A Somnour and a Pardoner also,
A Mounciple, and my-self; ther were namo.
The MILLER was a stout carl, for the nones, **Miller** 545
Ful big he was of braun and eek of bones;
That proved wel, for over-al ther he cam,
At wrastling he wolde have alwey the ram.
He was short-sholdred, brood, a thikke knarre,
Ther nas no dore that he nolde heve of harre, 550
Or breke it, at a renning, with his heed.
His berd as any sowe or fox was reed,
And ther-to brood, as though it were a spade.
Up-on the cop right of his nose he hade
A werte, and ther-on stood a tuft of heres,

494. **ferreste**, the farthermost removed in dwelling. **muche and lyte**, of high and low degree. 502. **lewed**, ignorant. 504. **shiten**, foul. 507. **He sette nat**, etc., "he did not rent out his office to some underling." 508. **leet**, leave. 510. **chaunterie for soules.** At St. Paul's were many foundations to pay for priests to say Mass for the dead. The priest who received the benefits of the foundation had only to say the necessary Masses and draw his pay. 511. **Or with**, etc., or be supported by some religious organization that needed a priest. 516. **despitous**, contemptuous. 517. **daungerous ne digne**, haughty or stately. 523. **snibben for the nones**, reprimand at once. 525. **wayted after**, expected. 526. **spyced**, prepared, artificial.

527. **lore**, teaching. 530. **y-lad**, etc., "spread many a load of manure." 531. **swinker**, worker. 534. **thogh him gamed or smerte**, "whether it fared well or ill with him." 536. **dyke and delve**, make ditches and dig. 540. **propre swink**, own labor. **catel**, goods. 541. **mere**, mare. 542. **Reve**, etc. Explanatory notes on the various characters appear where each is described in detail. 545. **stout carl, for the nones**, in truth, a strong fellow. 547. **That proved**, etc., "as was well proved, for wherever he came." 548. **wolde have the ram**, won the prize, which frequently was a ram. 549. **thikke knarre**, thick-set fellow. 550. **heve of harre**, heave off its hinge. 551. **Or breke it**, etc. Another highly intellectual amusement of the Miller and his friends was to break a door by running at it with their heads. 554. **cop**, tip.

Reed as the bristles of a sowes eres;
His nose-thirles blake were and wyde.
A swerd and bokeler bar he by his syde;
His mouth as greet was as a greet forneys.
He was a janglere and a goliardeys, 560
And that was most of sinne and harlotryes.
Wel coude he stelen corn, and tollen thryes;
And yet he hadde a thombe of gold, pardee.
A whyt cote and a blew hood wered he.
A baggepype wel coude he blowe and sowne, 565
And ther-with-al he broghte us out of towne.

A gentil MAUNCIPLE was ther of a temple, **Maunciple**
Of which achatours mighte take exemple
For to be wyse in bying of vitaille.
For whether that he payde, or took by taille, 570
Algate he wayted so in his achat
That he was ay biforn and in good stat.
Now is nat that of God a ful fair grace,
That swich a lewed mannes wit shal pace
The wisdom of an heep of lerned men?
Of maistres hadde he mo than thryes ten, 576
That were of lawe expert and curious;
Of which ther were a doseyn in that hous,
Worthy to been stiwardes of rente and lond
Of any lord that is in Engelond, 580
To make him live by his propre good,
In honour dettelees, but he were wood,
Or live as scarsly as him list desire;
And able for to helpen al a shire
In any cas that mighte falle or happe; 585
And yit this maunciple sette hir aller cappe. **Reve**

The REVE was a sclendre, colerik man,
His berd was shave as ny as ever he can.
His heer was by his eres round y-shorn.
His top was dokked lyk a preest biforn.
Ful longe were his legges, and ful lene,
Y-lyk a staf, ther was no calf y-sene. 592
Wel coude he kepe a gerner and a binne;
Ther was noon auditour coude on him winne.
Wel wiste he, by the droghte, and by the reyn, 595
The yelding of his seed and of his greyn.
His lordes sheep, his neet, his dayerye,
His swyn, his hors, his stoor, and his pultrye
Was hoolly in this reves governing,
And by his covenaunt yaf the rekening, 600
Sin that his lord was twenty yeer of age;
Ther coude no man bringe him in arrerage.
Ther nas baillif, ne herde, ne other hyne,
That he ne knew his sleighte and his covyne;
They were adrad of him as of the deeth.
His woning was ful fair up-on an heeth, 606
With grene treës shadwed was his place.
He coude bettre than his lord purchace.
Ful riche he was astored prively;
His lord wel coude he plesen subtilly, 610
To yeve and lene him of his owne good,
And have a thank, and yet a cote and hood.
In youthe he lerned hadde a good mister;
He was a wel good wrighte, a carpenter.
This reve sat up-on a ful good stot, 615
That was al pomely grey, and highte Scot.
A long surcote of pers up-on he hade,
And by his syde he bar a rusty blade.
Of Northfolk was this reve of which I telle,

557. **nose-thirles**, nostrils. 560. **janglere and a goliardeys**, loud talker and a teller of vulgar jokes. 561. **harlotryes**, foul talk. 562. **tollen thryes.** Millers received pay for grinding corn and a certain percentage of the amount ground. This Miller took three times as much as the law allowed. 563. **thombe of gold.** Millers tested their flour between the thumb and first finger. This Miller had a very expert thumb. 565. **sowne**, sound. 567. **Maunciple**, a steward who cared for the general upkeep of the bachelor lodgings of the lawyers in the Temple, or Inns of Court. 568. **achatours**, buyers. 570. **taille**, credit. 571. **Algate**, etc., "always he was so careful in his purchasing." 574. **That swich**, etc., "that the wit of such an ignorant man should surpass." 582. **wood**, crazy.

586. **sette hir aller cappe**, fooled or cheated them all. 587. **Reve**, a minor officer of a feudal manor. 590. **dokked**, closely cropped or shaved like the tonsure of a priest. 593. **gerner**, garner. 597. **neet**, cattle. 598. **stoor**, stock. 600. **covenaunt**, agreement. 601. **Sin**, since. 602. **arrerage**, arrears. 603. **Ther nas**, etc., "there was no agent for the lord of the manor, nor shepherd, nor farm laborer." 604. **That he**, etc., "whose tricks and business methods he did not know." 606. **woning**, dwelling. 611. **lene**, lend. 613. **mister**, trade. 614. **wrighte**, workman. 615. **stot**, cob. 616. **pomely**, dappled. **highte**, was called. 617. **pers**, blue cloth.

Bisyde a toun men clepen Baldeswelle.
Tukked he was, as is a frere, aboute, 621
And ever he rood the hindreste of our route.
A SOMNOUR was ther with us in that place, **Somnour**
That hadde a fyr-reed cherubinnes face,
For sawcefleem he was, with eyen narwe.
As hoot he was, and lecherous, as a sparwe; 626
With scalled browes blake, and piled berd;
Of his visage children were aferd.
Ther nas quik-silver, litarge, ne brimstoon,
Boras, ceruce, ne oille of tartre noon,
Ne oynement that wolde clense and byte, 631
That him mighte helpen of his whelkes whyte,
Nor of the knobbes sittinge on his chekes.
Wel loved he garleek, oynons, and eek lekes,
And for to drinken strong wyn, reed as blood. 635
Than wolde he speke, and crye as he were wood.
And whan that he wel dronken hadde the wyn,
Than wolde he speke no word but Latyn.
A fewe termes hadde he, two or three,
That he had lerned out of som decree;
No wonder is, he herde it al the day; 641
And eek ye knowen wel how that a jay
Can clepen "Watte," as well as can the pope.
But who-so coude in other thing him grope,
Thanne hadde he spent al his philosophye; 645
Ay "*Questio quid iuris*" wolde he crye.
He was a gentil harlot and a kinde;
A bettre felawe sholde men noght finde.
He wolde suffre for a quart of wyn
A good felawe to have his concubyn. 650
A twelf-month, and excuse him atte fulle;
Ful prively a finch eek coude he pulle.
And if he fond o-wher a good felawe,
He wolde techen him to have non awe,
In swich cas, of the erchedeknes curs, 655
But-if a mannes soule were in his purs;
For in his purs he sholde y-punisshed be.
"Purs is the erchedeknes helle," seyde he.
But wel I woot he lyed right in dede;
Of cursing oghte ech gilty man him drede— 660
For curs wol slee, right as assoilling saveth—
And also war him of a *significavit*.
In daunger hadde he at his owne gyse
The yonge girles of the diocyse,
And knew hir counseil, and was al hir reed. 665
A gerland hadde he set up-on his heed,
As greet as it were for an ale-stake;
A bokeler hadde he maad him of a cake.
With him ther rood a gentil PARDONER **Pardoner**
Of Rouncival, his freend and his compeer, 670
That streight was comen fro the court of Rome.
Ful loude he song, "Com hider, love, to me."
This somnour bar to him a stif burdoun,
Was never trompe of half so greet a soun.
This pardoner hadde heer as yelow as wex, 675
But smothe it heng, as dooth a strike of flex;
By ounces henge his lokkes that he hadde,
And ther-with he his shuldres overspradde;

621. **Tukked.** His long coat was tucked in by his belt. 622. **route,** company. 623. **Somnour,** an officer of ecclesiastical courts who brought in delinquents. 624. **fyr-reed,** etc. Medieval paintings made the cherubim very red-faced. 625. **sawcefleem,** pimpled. **eyen narwe,** narrow eyes. 627. **scalled,** scabby. **piled,** scanty. 629. **litarge,** ointment of white lead. **brimstoon,** sulphur. 630. **Boras,** borax. **ceruce,** another ointment made from white lead. 632. **whelkes whyte,** white pimples. 643. **Watte,** Walter. 644. **But who-so,** etc., "but whoever knew enough to argue with him on another point." 646. **Questio quid iuris,** what is the law? 647. **gentil harlot,** nice fellow.

652. **Ful prively,** etc., "he knew how to fleece any unsuspecting person." 656. **But-if,** unless. 661. **right as,** etc., "just as absolution redeems." 662. **war him,** etc., "let him beware of a writ of excommunication," which began usually "Significavit." 663. **In daunger,** etc., "within his power, at his own will." 665. **reed,** adviser. 667. **ale-stake,** a support, like a horizontal flagstaff, from which a garland was hung out in front of an alehouse. 669. **Pardoner,** an ecclesiastic who received from Rome license to exhibit relics and grant special pardons in certain districts, or wherever he might go. 670. **Rouncival,** a reference to a London hospital, and not the French town of that name. 673. **stif burdoun,** strong bass. 676. **strike,** a bunch or hank. 677. **ounces,** thin curls.

But thinne it lay, by colpons oon and oon;
But hood, for jolitee, ne wered he noon,
For it was trussed up in his walet. 681
Him thoughte he rood al of the newe jet;
Dischevele, save his cappe, he rood al bare.
Swiche glaringe eyen hadde he as an hare.
A vernicle hadde he sowed on his cappe.
His walet lay biforn him in his lappe, 686
Bret-ful of pardoun come from Rome al hoot.
A voys he hadde as smal as hath a goot.
No berd hadde he, ne never sholde have,
As smothe it was as it were late y-shave;

. . . . . .

But of his craft, fro Berwik into Ware,
Ne was ther swich another pardoner.
For in his male he hadde a pilwe-beer,
Which that, he seyde, was our lady veyl:
He seyde he hadde a gobet of the seyl 696
That sëynt Peter hadde, whan that he wente
Up-on the see, til Jesu Crist him hente.
He hadde a croys of latoun, ful of stones,
And in a glas he hadde pigges bones. 700
But with thise relikes, whan that he fond
A povre person dwelling up-on lond,
Up-on a day he gat him more moneye
Than that the person gat in monthes tweye.
And thus with feyned flaterye and japes
He made the person and the peple his apes. 706
But trewely to tellen atte laste,
He was in chirche a noble ecclesiaste.
Wel coude he rede a lessoun or a storie,
But alderbest he sõng an offertorie; 710
For wel he wiste, whan that song was songe,
He moste preche, and wel affyle his tonge,
To winne silver, as he ful wel coude;
Therefore he song so meriely and loude.
Now have I told you shortly, in a clause, 715

679. **colpons**, bunches, locks. 680. **jolitee**, pleasure, comfort. 682. **Him thoughte**, it seemed to him. **jet**, style. 683. **Dischevele**, with unkempt hair. 685. **vernicle**, an image of St. Veronica. 687. **Bret-ful**, completely filled. 694. **male**, pouch. **pilwe-beer**, pillowcase. 696. **gobet**, piece. 698. **hente**, grasped. 699. **croys**, cross. **latoun**, a metal compounded of copper and zinc. 701. **fond**, found. 702. **up-on lond**, in the country. 705. **japes**, tricks. 710. **alderbest**, best of all. 712. **affyle**, file, make smooth.

Th'estat, th'array, the nombre, and eek the cause
Why that assembled was this companye
In Southwerk, at this gentil hostelrye,
That highte the Tabard, faste by the Belle.
But now is tyme to yow for to telle 720
How that we baren us that ilke night,
Whan we were in that hostelrye alight.
And after wol I telle of our viage,
And al the remenaunt of our pilgrimage.
But first I pray yow of your curteisye,
That ye n'arette it nat my vileinye, 726
Thogh that I pleynly speke in this matere,
To telle yow hir wordes and hir chere;
Ne thogh I speke hir wordes properly.
For this ye knowen al-so wel as I, 730
Who-so shal telle a tale after a man,
He moot reherce, as ny as ever he can,
Everich a word, if it be in his charge,
Al speke he never so rudeliche and large;
Or elles he moot telle his tale untrewe,
Or feyne thing, or finde wordes newe. 736
He may nat spare, al-thogh he were his brother;
He moot as wel seye o word as another.
Crist spak him-self ful brode in holy writ,
And wel ye woot no vileinye is it. 740
Eek Plato seith, who-so that can him rede,
The wordes mote be cosin to the dede.
Also I prey yow to foryeve it me,
Al have I nat set folk in hir degree
Here in this tale, as that they sholde stonde; 745
My wit is short, ye may wel understonde.
Greet chere made our hoste us everichon,
And to the soper sette us anon;
And served us with vitaille at the beste.
Strong was the wyn, and wel to drinke us leste. 750
A semely man our hoste was with-alle

719. **Belle**, a tavern. 726. **That ye**, etc., "that you do not set it down to my ill-breeding." 728. **chere**, behaviour. 729. **properly**, truly. 732. **reherce**, repeat. Chaucer's humor is here at work, for medieval writers often claimed to follow their sources, when in fact they either departed widely from them or had none. 734. **large**, broadly. 739. **brode**, plain. 742. **mote**, must. 744. **Al have**, etc., "although I have not set people down according to their social rank" 750. **leste**, pleased.

For to han been a marshal in an halle;
A large man he was with eyen stepe,
A fairer burgeys is ther noon in Chepe:
Bold of his speche, and wys, and wel y-taught, 755
And of manhod him lakkede right naught.
Eek therto he was right a mery man,
And after soper pleyen he bigan,
And spak of mirthe amonges othere thinges,
Whan that we hadde maad our rekeninges; 760
And seyde thus: "Now, lordinges, trewely
Ye been to me right welcome hertely:
For by my trouthe, if that I shal nat lye,
I ne saugh this yeer so mery a companye
At ones in this herberwe as is now. 765
Fayn wolde I doon yow mirthe, wiste I how.
And of a mirthe I am right now bithoght,
To doon yow ese, and it shal coste noght.
Ye goon to Caunterbury; God yow spede,
The blisful martir quyte yow your mede. 770
And wel I woot, as ye goon by the weye,
Ye shapen yow to talen and to pleye;
For trewely, confort ne mirthe is noon
To ryde by the weye doumb as a stoon;
And therfore wol I maken yow disport, 775
As I seyde erst, and doon yow som confort.
And if yow lyketh alle, by oon assent,
Now for to stonden at my jugement,
And for to werken as I shal yow seye,
To-morwe, whan ye ryden by the weye,
Now, by my fader soule, that is deed, 781
But ye be merye, I wol yeve yow myn heed.
Hold up your hond, withouten more speche."

752. **marshal**, supervisor of a hall, who kept order and arranged for everyone to have his proper place. 754. **Chepe**, Cheapside. In the Middle Ages it was an open square near St. Paul's Cathedral, in which were held markets, fairs, and the like; hence its name. It is today one of London's principal business streets. 765. **herberwe**, inn. 770. **quyte yow your mede**, "give you your reward." 772. **Ye shapen**, etc., "you intend to tell stories and amuse yourselves." 775. **disport**, diversion. 777. **And if**, etc., "and if it pleases you with common consent." 778. **stonden at**, abide by. 782. **heed**, plan.

Our counseil was nat longe for to seche;
Us thoughte it was noght worth to make it wys, 785
And graunted him withouten more avys,
And bad him seye his verdit, as him leste.
"Lordinges," quod he, "now herkneth for the beste;
But tak it not, I prey yow, in desdeyn;
This is the poynt, to speken short and pleyn, 790
That ech of yow, to shorte with your weye,
In this viage shal telle tales tweye,
To Caunterbury-ward, I mene it so,
And hom-ward he shal tellen othere two,
Of aventures that whylom han bifalle.
And which of yow that bereth him best of alle, 796
That is to seyn, that telleth in this cas
Tales of best sentence and most solas,
Shal have a soper at our aller cost
Here in this place, sitting by this post,
Whan that we come agayn fro Caunterbury. 801
And for to make yow the more mery,
I wol my-selven gladly with yow ryde,
Right at myn owne cost, and be your gyde.
And who-so wol my jugement withseye
Shal paye al that we spenden by the weye. 806
And if ye vouche-sauf that it be so,
Tel me anon, with-outen wordes mo,
And I wol erly shape me therfore."
This thing was graunted and our othes swore 810
With ful glad herte and preyden him also
That he wold vouche-sauf for to do so,
And that he wolde been our governour,
And of our tales juge and reportour,
And sette a soper at a certeyn prys; 815
And we wold reuled been at his devys,
In heigh and lowe; and thus, by oon assent,

785. **make it wys**, "reflect on it much." 786. **avys**, advice, thought. 787. **leste**, pleased. 791. **shorte**, shorten. 794. **othere two**. Chaucer never completed his plan. 798. **sentence**, moral import. **solas**, amusement. 799. **our aller cost**, the expense of us all. 800. **post**, the newel post. 805. **withseye**, withstand. 809. **shape**, prepare.

We been acorded to his jugement.
And ther-up-on the wyn was fet anon;
We dronken, and to reste wente echoon,
With-outen any lenger taryinge. 821
A-morwe, whan that day bigan to springe,
Up roos our host, and was our aller cok,
And gadrede us togidre alle in a flok,
And forth we riden, a litel more than pas, 825
Un-to the watering of seint Thomas.
And there our host bigan his hors areste,
And seyde: "Lordinges, herkneth if yow leste.
Ye woot your forward, and I it yow recorde.
If even-song and morwe-song acorde, 830
Lat see now who shal telle the firste tale.
As ever mote I drinke wyn or ale,
Who-so be rebel to my jugement
Shal paye for al that by the weye is spent.
Now draweth cut, er that we ferrer twinne; 835
He which that hath the shortest shal biginne.
Sire knight," quod he, "my maister and my lord,
Now draweth cut, for that is myn acord.
Cometh neer," quod he, "my lady prioresse;
And ye, sir clerk, lat be your shamfastnesse, 840
Ne studieth noght; ley hond to, every man."
Anon to drawen every wight bigan,
And shortly for to tellen as it was,
Were it by aventure, or sort, or cas,
The sothe is this, the cut fil to the knight, 845
Of which ful blythe and glad was every wight;

819. **fet**, fetched. 823. **aller cok**, i.e., who aroused us as does the rooster, that awakens one with his crowing. 825. **a litel more than pas**, at little more than a walk. 826. **watering of seint Thomas**, the watering trough at the second milestone on the road to Canterbury. 829. **Ye woot your forward**, "you know your compact." **recorde**, recall. 830. **morwe-song acorde**, morning song agree. 832. **mote**, may. 835. **ferrer twinne**, go farther. 838. **acord**, judgment. 841. **Ne studieth noght**, "don't deliberate." **ley hond to, every man**, "take one, everybody." 844. **aventure**, luck. **sort**, destiny. **cas**, chance.

And telle he moste his tale, as was resoun,
By forward and by composicioun,
As ye han herd; what nedeth wordes mo?
And whan this gode man saugh it was so, 850
As he that wys was and obedient
To kepe his forward by his free assent,
He seyde: "Sin I shal beginne the game,
What, welcome be the cut, a Goddes name!
Now lat us ryde, and herkneth what I seye." 855
And with that word we riden forth our weye;
And he bigan with right a mery chere
His tale anon, and seyde in this manere.

. . . . . .

WORDS OF THE HOST

THE WORDES OF THE HOST TO .....THE PARDONER

. . . . . .

"Thou *bel amy*, thou Pardoner," he seyde,
"Tel us som mirthe or japes right anon."
"It shall be doon," quod he, "by seint Ronyon!
But first," quod he, "heer at this ale-stake
I wol both drinke, and eten of a cake." 5
But right anon thise gentils gonne to crye,
"Nay! lat him telle us of no ribaudye;
Tel us som moral thing, that we may lere
Som wit, and thanne wol we gladly here."
"I graunte, y-wis," quod he, "but I mot thinke 10
Up-on som honest thing, whyl that I drinke."

848. **forward**, covenant. **composicioun**, agreement. *Words of the Host.* 1. **Thou bel amy**, an old French term of endearment meaning "dear friend" or "sweetheart." 2. **japes**, funny stories of trickery. 3. **seint Ronyon**, St. Ronan of Scotland. 7. **ribaudye**, ribaldry. 8. **lere**, learn. 11. **honest**, decent.

THE PROLOGUE OF THE PARDONER'S TALE

**Radix malorum est Cupiditas:*
Ad Thimotheum, sexto.

"Lordings," quod he, "in chirches whan I preche,
I peyne me to han an hauteyn speche,
And ringe it out as round as gooth a belle,
For I can al by rote that I telle.
My theme is alwey oon, and ever was— 5
'Radix malorum est Cupiditas.'
First I pronounce whennes that I come,
And than my bulles shewe I, alle and somme.
Our lige lordes seel on my patente,
That shewe I first, my body to warente,
That no man be so bold, ne preest ne clerk, 11
Me to destourbe of Cristes holy werk;
And after that than telle I forth my tales,
Bulles of popes and of cardinales,
Of patriarkes, and bishoppes I shewe; 15
And in Latyn I speke a wordes fewe,
To saffron with my predicacioun,
And for to stire men to devocioun.
Than shewe I forth my longe cristal stones,
Y-crammed ful of cloutes and of bones;
Reliks been they, as wenen they echoon.
Than have I in latoun a sholder-boon 22
Which that was of an holy Jewes shepe.
'Good men,' seye I, 'tak of my wordes kepe;
If that this boon be wasshe in any welle,
If cow, or calf, or sheep, or oxe swelle 26
That any worm hath ete, or worm y-stonge,
Tak water of that welle, and wash his tonge,
And it is hool anon; and forthermore,
Of pokkes and of scabbe, and every sore
Shal every sheep be hool, that of this welle
Drinketh a draughte; tak kepe eek what I telle.
If that the good-man, that the bestes oweth,
Wol every wike, er that the cok him croweth,
Fastinge, drinken of this welle a draughte, 35
As thilke holy Jewe our eldres taughte,
His bestes and his stoor shal multiplye.
And, sirs, also it heleth jalousye;
For, though a man be falle in jalous rage,
Let maken with this water his potage, 40
And never shal he more his wyf mistriste,
Though he the sooth of hir defaute wiste;

. . . . . .

Heer is a miteyn eek, that ye may see.
He that his hond wol putte in this miteyn, 45
He shal have multiplying of his greyn,
Whan he hath sowen, be it whete or otes,
So that he offre pens, or elles grotes.
Good men and wommen, o thing warne I yow,
If any wight be in this chirche now, 50
That hath doon sinne horrible, that he
Dar nat, for shame, of it y-shriven be,
Or any womman, be she yong or old,
That hath y-maad hir housbond cokewold,
Swich folk shul have no power ne no grace 55
To offren to my reliks in this place.
And who-so findeth him out of swich blame,
He wol com up and offre in goddes name,
And I assoille him by the auctoritee
Which that by bulle y-graunted was to me.' 60
By this gaude have I wonne, yeer by yeer,
An hundred mark sith I was Pardoner.
I stonde lyk a clerk in my pulpet,
And whan the lewed peple is doun y-set,

*"The love of money is the root of all evil." I. Timothy, vi, 10. 2. **I peyne**, etc., "I take pains to affect a lofty tone." 4. **For I can**, etc., "for I know my subject by heart." 8. **bulles.** Bulls were letters patent of the Pope or the higher clergy to which were appended leaden seals or *bullae.* The Pardoner had one, the usual pardoner's license. **alle and somme**, one and all. 10. **warente**, protect. 17. **saffron**, color. Saffron may be used to color food as well as to season it. 19. **cristal stones**, hollow crystals. 20. **cloutes**, rags. 22. **latoun**, an alloy like brass. 27. **worm.** Here the word may mean "snake."

33. **oweth**, owns. 34. **wike**, week. 37. **stoor**, stock. 40. **potage**, broth. 42. **Though he**, etc., "though he knew the truth of her fault." 48. **So that**, etc., "provided that he offers pennies or else groats." The groat was worth four pence. 52. **y-shriven**, shrived, absolved. 54. **cokewold**, cuckold. 56. **To offren**, etc. The pardoner is protecting himself against any unrepentant sinners. 59. **assoille**, absolve. 61. **gaude**, trick. 62. **mark**, the equivalent of at least $3.50. 64. **lewed**, ignorant.

I preche, so as ye han herd bifore, 65
And telle an hundred false japes more.
Than peyne I me to strecche forth the nekke,
And est and west upon the peple I bekke,
As doth a dowve sitting on a berne.
Myn hondes and my tonge goon so yerne, 70
That it is joye to see my bisinesse.
Of avaryce and of swich cursednesse
Is al my preching, for to make hem free
To yeve her pens, and namely un-to me.
For my entente is nat but for to winne,
And no-thing for correccioun of sinne. 76
I rekke never, whan that they ben beried,
Though that her soules goon a-blakeberied!
For certes, many a predicacioun
Comth ofte tyme of yvel entencioun; 80
Som for plesaunce of folk and flaterye,
To been avaunced by ipocrisye,
And som for veyne glorie, and som for hate.
For, whan I dar non other weyes debate,
Than wol I stinge him with my tonge smerte 85
In preching, so that he shal nat asterte
To been defamed falsely, if that he
Hath trespased to my brethren or to me.
For, though I telle noght his propre name,
Men shal wel knowe that it is the same 90
By signes and by othere circumstances.
Thus quyte I folk that doon us displesances;
Thus spitte I out my venim under hewe
Of holynesse, to seme holy and trewe.
But shortly myn entente I wol devyse;
I preche of no-thing but for coveityse. 96
Therfor my theme is yet, and ever was—
'*Radix malorum est cupiditas.*'

66. **japes**, tricks. 68. **bekke**, nod, bow. 69. **berne**, barn. 70. **yerne**, quickly, eagerly. 75. **nat but**, only. 77. **rekke**, care. 78. **Though that**, etc., "even if their souls go blackberrying," i.e., I do not care where their souls go. 79. **predicacioun**, preaching. 86. **so that**, etc., "so that he shall not escape being defamed falsely." 88. **trespased**, wronged. 92. **quyte**, repay. 95. **devyse**, tell. 96. **for coveityse**, from covetousness.

Thus can I preche agayn that same vyce
Which that I use, and that is avaryce.
But, though my-self be gilty in that sinne, 101
Yet can I maken other folk to twinne
From avaryce, and sore to repente.
But that is nat my principal entente.
I preche no-thing but for coveityse; 105
Of this matere it oughte y-nogh suffyse.
Than telle I hem ensamples many oon
Of olde stories, longe tyme agoon:
For lewed peple loven tales olde;
Swich thinges can they wel reporte and holde. 110
What? trowe ye, the whyles I may preche,
And winne gold and silver for I teche,
That I wol live in povert wilfully?
Nay, nay, I thoghte it never trewely!
For I wol preche and begge in sondry londes; 115
I wol not do no labour with myn hondes,
Ne make baskettes, and live therby,
Because I wol nat beggen ydelly.
I wol non of the apostles counterfete;
I wol have money, wolle, chese, and whete, 120
Al were it yeven of the povrest page,
Or of the povrest widwe in a village,
Al sholde hir children sterve for famyne.
Nay! I wol drinke licour of the vyne,
And have a joly wenche in every toun. 125
But herkneth, lordings, in conclusioun;
Your lyking is that I shal telle a tale.
Now, have I dronke a draughte of corny ale,
By god, I hope I shal yow telle a thing
That shal, by resoun, been at your lyking. 130
For, though myself be a ful vicious man,
A moral tale yet I yow telle can,
Which I am wont to preche, for to winne.
Now holde your pees, my tale I wol beginne."

102. **twinne**, separate, depart. 112. **for I teche**, "for what I teach" or "because I teach." 113. **povert**, poverty. 117. **Ne make baskettes**, in imitation of the early saints. 119. **apostles counterfete**. Many of the apostles labored with their hands, as did St. Peter, the fisherman; St. Paul was a tent-maker. 121. **Al**, although. 123. **sterve**, die. 128. **corny**, tasting strongly of grain.

THE PARDONER'S TALE

HERE BEGINNETH THE PARDONER'S TALE

In Flaundres whylom was a companye
Of yonge folk, that haunteden folye,
As ryot, hasard, stewes, and tavernes,
Wher-as, with harpes, lutes, and giternes,
They daunce and pleye at dees bothe day and night, 5
And ete also and drinken over hir might,
Thurgh which they doon the devel sacrifyse
With-in that develes temple, in cursed wyse,
By superfluitee abhominable;
Hir othes been so grete and so dampnable, 10
That it is grisly for to here hem swere;
Our blissed lordes body they to-tere;
Hem thoughte Jewes rente him noght y-nough;
And ech of hem at otheres sinne lough.
And right anon than comen tombesteres
Fetys and smale, and yonge fruytesteres, 16
Singers with harpes, baudes, wafereres,
Whiche been the verray develes officeres
To kindle and blowe the fyr of lecherye,
That is annexed un-to glotonye; 20
The holy writ take I to my witnesse,
That luxurie is in wyn and dronkenesse.
Lo, how that dronken Loth, unkindely,
Lay by his doghtres two, unwitingly;
So dronke he was, he niste what he wroghte. 25
Herodes, (who-so wel the stories soghte),
Whan he of wyn was replet at his feste,
Right at his owene table he yaf his heste
To sleen the Baptist John ful giltelees.
Senek seith eek a good word doutelees;

1. **whylom**, once upon a time. 2. **haunteden folye**, lived riotously. 3. **As ryot**, etc., "as riotous living, dice-playing, houses of ill-repute, and inns." 4. **giternes**, guitars. 5. **dees**, dice. 6. **over hir might**, to excess. 10. **Hir**, their. 11. **grisly**, fearful. 12. **to-tere**, tear apart. Swearing was supposed figuratively to wound the body of Jesus. 13. **Hem thoughte**, it seemed to them. 14. **lough**, laughed. 15. **tombesteres**, female jugglers or dancers. 16. **Fetys**, well-formed. **fruytesteres**, female fruit-sellers. 17. **wafereres**, sellers of candy. 22. **luxurie**, lechery. 23. **unkindely**, unnaturally. 26. **who-so wel**, etc., "whoever would look up the stories carefully." 27. **replet**, full. 28. **yaf his heste**, gave his command. 30. **Senek**, Seneca, the Roman philosopher.

He seith, he can no difference finde 31
Bitwix a man that is out of his minde
And a man which that is dronkelewe,
But that woodnesse, y-fallen in a shrewe,
Persevereth lenger than doth dronkenesse. 35
O glotonye, ful of cursednesse,
O cause first of our confusioun,
O original of our dampnacioun,
Til Crist had boght us with his blood agayn!
Lo, how dere, shortly for to sayn, 40
Aboght was thilke cursed vileinye;
Corrupt was al this world for glotonye!
Adam our fader, and his wyf also,
Fro Paradys to labour and to wo
Were driven for that vyce, it is no drede;
For whyl that Adam fasted, as I rede, 46
He was in Paradys; and whan that he,
Eet of the fruyt defended on the tree,
Anon he was out-cast to wo and peyne.
O glotonye, on thee wel oghte us pleyne!
O, wiste a man how many maladyes 51
Folwen of excesse and of glotonyes,
He wolde been the more mesurable
Of his diete, sittinge at his table.
Allas! the shorte throte, the tendre mouth, 55
Maketh that, Est and West, and North and South,
In erthe, in eir, in water men to-swinke
To gete a glotoun deyntee mete and drinke!
Of this matere, o Paul, wel canstow trete,
"Mete un-to wombe, and wombe eek un-to mete, 60
Shal god destroyen bothe," as Paulus seith.
Allas! a foul thing is it, by my feith,
To seye this word, and fouler is the dede,
Whan man so drinketh of the whyte and rede,
That of his throte he maketh his privee,
Thurgh thilke cursed superfluitee. 66

33. **dronkelewe**, an habitual drunkard. 34. **But that woodnesse**, etc., "except that madness, when it has possessed an ill-tempered person, lasts longer than drunkenness." 38. **original**, first cause. 39. **boght**, redeemed. 45. **it is no drede**, there is no doubt about it. 48. **defended**, forbidden. 50. **O glotonye**, etc., "O gluttony, we ought to complain about you." 57. **to-swinke**, work. 60. **wombe**, belly. See I Corinthians, vi, 13. 64. **whyte and rede**, wine.

The apostel weping seith ful pitously,
"Ther walken many of whiche yow told have I,
I seye it now weping with pitous voys,
That they been enemys of Cristes croys, 70
Of whiche the ende is deeth, wombe is her god."

. . . . . .

How greet labour and cost is thee to finde! 75
Thise cokes, how they stampe, and streyne, and grinde,
And turnen substaunce in-to accident,
To fulfille al thy likerous talent!
Out of the harde bones knokke they
The mary, for they caste noght a-wey 80
That may go thurgh the golet softe and swote;
Of spicerye, of leef, and bark, and rote
Shal been his sauce y-maked by delyt,
To make him yet a newer appetyt,
But certes, he that haunteth swich delyces 85
Is deed, whyl that he liveth in tho vyces.
A lecherous thing is wyn, and dronkenesse
Is ful of stryving and of wrecchednesse.
O dronke man, disfigured is thy face,
Sour is thy breeth, foul artow to embrace, 90
And thurgh thy dronke nose semeth the soun
As though thou seydest ay "Sampsoun, Sampsoun";
And yet, god wot, Sampsoun drank never no wyn.
Thou fallest, as it were a stiked swyn;
Thy tonge is lost, and al thyn honest cure; 95
For dronkenesse is verray sepulture
Of mannes wit and his discrecioun.

67. **The apostel seith.** Philippians, iii, 18. 75. **finde,** to provide for. 77. **turnen substaunce,** etc. In the Middle Ages the scholastic philosophers fought over the *substance* and *accidents* of any material. The *substance* was the essence, while the *accidents* were the external phenomena. The cooks were said so to change the substance of food by their art that its accidents gave no clue to its substance. 78. **likerous talent,** lecherous inclination. 80. **mary,** marrow. 82. **rote,** root. 85. **But certes,** etc., "but truly, he who frequents such pleasures is dead while he lives in these vices." 92. **Sampsoun,** etc. The word *Sampsoun* reminds the Pardoner of the sound of a drunken man breathing heavily. Samson as a Nazarite did not taste wine or cut his hair. 95. **cure,** care. 96. **verray sepulture,** the very grave.

In whom that drinke hath dominacioun,
He can no conseil kepe, it is no drede.
Now kepe yow fro the whyte and fro the rede, 100
And namely fro the whyte wyn of Lepe,
That is to selle in Fish-strete or in Chepe.
This wyn of Spayne crepeth subtilly
In othere wynes, growing faste by,
Of which ther ryseth swich fumositee,
That whan a man hath dronken draughtes three, 106
And weneth that he be at hoom in Chepe,
He is in Spayne, right at the toune of Lepe,
Nat at the Rochel, ne at Burdeux toun;
And thanne wol he seye, "Sampsoun, Sampsoun." 110
But herkneth, lordings, o word, I yow preye,
That alle the sovereyn actes, dar I seye,
Of victories in th'olde testament,
Thurgh verray god, that is omnipotent,
Were doon in abstinence and in preyere;
Loketh the Bible, and ther ye may it lere. 116
Loke, Attila, the grete conquerour,
Deyde in his sleep, with shame and dishonour,
Bledinge ay at his nose in dronkenesse;
A capitayn shoulde live in sobrenesse.
And over al this, avyseth yow right wel
What was comaunded un-to Lamuel—
Nat Samuel, but Lamuel, seye I— 123
Redeth the Bible, and finde it expresly
Of wyn-yeving to hem that han justyse.
Na-more of this, for it may wel suffyse.
And now that I have spoke of glotonye, 127

99. **drede.** See note on line 45, page 167. 101. **namely,** especially. **Lepe,** a locality near Cadiz. 102. **That is,** etc., "which is for sale in Fish Street or in Cheapside." Fish Street is near London Bridge. 103. **This wyn,** etc. Chaucer, as a comptroller of petty customs, knew well how wines were mixed. There was an explicit law against this practice, even against putting Spanish wine and French wine in the same cellar. **crepeth subtilly,** "insinuates itself wondrously." 105. **fumositee,** vapor. 107. **weneth,** thinks. 109. **Rochel,** La Rochelle, a port in northern France. **Burdeux,** Bordeaux, a port in southwest France. 112. **sovereyn,** supreme. 114. **verray,** true, veritable. 116. **lere,** learn. 117. **Loke, Attila,** etc. Attila, king of the Huns, died in Italy in 453 of a hemorrhage on the night of his nuptials with his latest concubine. 123. **Lamuel,** etc. Good King Lemuel is named in the Book of Proverbs in the thirty-first chapter, where his mother gives him advice. Among other things she tells him, in verses 4-5, that kings must not drink strong wines, lest the wine pervert judgment.

Now wol I yow defenden hasardrye.
Hasard is verray moder of lesinges,
And of deceite, and cursed forsweringes,
Blaspheme of Crist, manslaughtre, and wast also 131
Of catel and of tyme; and forthermo,
It is repreve and contrarie of honour
For to ben holde a commune hasardour.
And ever the hyër he is of estaat, 135
The more is he holden desolaat.
If that a prince useth hasardrye,
In alle governaunce and policye
He is, as by commune opinioun,
Y-holde the lasse in reputacioun. 140
Stilbon, that was a wys embassadour,
Was sent to Corinthe, in ful greet honour,
Fro Lacidomie, to make hir alliaunce.
And whan he cam, him happede, par chaunce,
That alle the grettest that were of that lond, 145
Pleyinge atte hazard he hem fond.
For which, as sone as it mighte be,
He stal him hoom agayn to his contree,
And seyde, "ther wol I nat lese my name;
N' I wol nat take on me so greet defame, 150
Yow for to allye un-to none hasardours.
Sendeth othere wyse embassadours;
For, by my trouthe, me were lever dye,
Than I yow sholde to hasardours allye.
For ye that been so glorious in honours
Shul nat allyen yow with hasardours 156
As by my wil, ne as by my tretee."
This wyse philosophre thus seyde he.
Loke eek that, to the king Demetrius
The king of Parthes, as the book seith us, 160
Sente him a paire of dees of gold in scorn,
For he hadde used hasard ther-biforn;
For which he heeld his glorie or his renoun
At no value or reputacioun.
Lordes may finden other maner pley 165
Honeste y-nough to dryve the day awey.

Now wol I speke of othes false and grete
A word or two, as olde bokes trete.
Gret swering is a thing abhominable,
And false swering is yet more reprevable 170
The heighe god forbad swering at al,
Witnesse on Mathew; but in special
Of swering seith the holy Jeremye,
"Thou shalt seye sooth thyn othes, and nat lye,
And swere in dome, and eek in rightwisnesse"; 175
But ydel swering is a cursednesse.
Bihold and see, that in the firste table
Of heighe goddes hestes honurable,
How that the seconde heste of him is this—
"Tak nat my name in ydel or amis." 180
Lo, rather he forbedeth swich swering
Than homicyde or many a cursed thing;
I seye that, as by ordre, thus it stondeth;
This knowen, that his hestes understondeth,
How that the second heste of god is that. 185
And forther over, I wol thee telle al plat,
That vengeance shal nat parten from his hous,
That of his othes is to outrageous.
"By goddes precious herte, and by his nayles,
And by the blode of Crist, that it is in Hayles, 190
Seven is my chaunce, and thyn is cink and treye;
By goddes armes, if thou falsly pleye,
This dagger shal thurgh-out thyn herte go"—
This fruyt cometh of the bicched bones two,

128. **defenden hasardrye**, forbid gambling. 129. **lesinges**, lies. 131. **wast also**, etc., "and waste also of goods and time." 133. **repreve**, reproach. 136. **holden desolaat**, shunned. 141. **Stilbon.** Chaucer has mistaken Chilon, the Lacedaemonian, for Stilbon. John of Salisbury includes this story and the next in his *Polycraticus* (Bk. I, Ch V.) 148. **stal**, stole. 149. **lese**, lose. 153. **me were lever dye**, "I had rather die." 161. **dees**, dice. 166. **dryve the day awey**, "to pass away the time."

172. **on Mathew**, Matthew, v, 34, "But I say unto you, swear not at all." 173. **Jeremye**, Jeremiah, iv, 2, "And thou shalt swear the Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness." 174. **sooth**, truly. 175. **dome**, judgment. 177. **firste table.** The first tablet (I-V) of the Ten Commandments was supposed to explain man's relations with God; the second (VI-X), man's relations with other men. 178. **hestes**, Commandments. 180. **Tak nat**, etc. The second commandment according to the medieval arrangement was, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." **ydel or amis**, "lightly or in vain." 186. **plat**, plain. 187. **parten**, depart. 189. **nayles**, the nails by which Christ was fastened to the cross. 190. **Hayles.** Hales was an abbey in Gloucestershire to which Richard, the brother of Henry III, gave a vial said to contain the blood of Christ. 191. **Seven**, etc. In the game of hazard the caster had to throw seven. **cink**, five; **treye**, three. 194. **bicched**, cursed.

Forswering, ire, falsnesse, homicyde. 195
Now, for the love of Crist that for us dyde,
Leveth your othes, bothe grete and smale;
But, sirs, now wol I telle forth my tale.
Thise ryotoures three, of whiche I telle,
Longe erst er pryme rong of any belle,
Were set hem in a taverne for to drinke;
And as they satte, they herde a belle clinke 202
Biforn a cors, was caried to his grave;
That oon of hem gan callen to his knave,
"Go bet," quod he, "and axe redily, 205
What cors is this that passeth heer forby;
And look that thou reporte his name wel."
"Sir," quod this boy, "it nedeth never-a-del.
It was me told, er ye cam heer, two houres;
He was, pardee, an old felawe of youres;
And sodeynly he was y-slayn to-night,
For-dronke, as he sat on his bench upright; 212
Ther cam a privee theef, men clepeth Deeth,
That in this contree al the peple sleeth,
And with his spere he smoot his herte a-two, 215
And wente his wey with-outen wordes mo.
He hath a thousand slayn this pestilence:
And, maister, er ye come in his presence,
Me thinketh that it were necessarie
For to be war of swich an adversarie: 220
Beth redy for to mete him evermore.
Thus taughte me my dame, I sey namore."
"By seinte Marie," seyde this taverner,
"The child seith sooth, for he hath slayn this yeer,

195. **Forswering**, falsehood, perjury. **ire**, anger. **homicyde.** The Pardoner in his discourse has covered by this time quite a few of the seven deadly sins. 200. **pryme**, nine o'clock in the morning. 205. **Go bet**, etc., "hurry out," said he, "and ask straightway." 208. **nedeth never-a-del**, "it isn't necessary." 210. **pardee.** The word means literally "by God," but in usage was softened to "truly." 212. **For-dronke**, very drunk. 213. **privee**, secret. **clepeth**, call. 217. **pestilence.** Chaucer had seen many plagues. The worst one occurred in 1349, and there were three thereafter, the last being in 1376.

Henne over a myle, with-in a greet village, 225
Both man and womman, child and hyne, and page.
I trowe his habitacioun be there;
To been avysed greet wisdom it were,
Er that he dide a man a dishonour."
"Ye, goddes armes," quod this ryotour,
"Is it swich peril with him for to mete?
I shal him seke by wey and eek by strete,
I make avow to goddes digne bones! 233
Herkneth, felawes, we three been al ones;
Lat ech of us holde up his hond til other,
And ech of us bicomen otheres brother,
And we wol sleen this false traytour Deeth; 237
He shal be slayn, which that so many sleeth,
By goddes dignitee, er it be night."
Togidres han thise three her trouthes plight, 240
To live and dyen ech of hem for other,
As though he were his owene y-boren brother.
And up they sterte al dronken, in this rage,
And forth they goon towardes that village,
Of which the taverner had spoke biforn,
And many a grisly ooth than han they sworn, 246
And Cristes blessed body they torente—
"Deeth shal be deed, if that they may him hente."
Whan they han goon nat fully half a myle,
Right as they wolde han troden over a style, 250
An old man and a povre with hem mette.
This olde man ful mekely hem grette,
And seyde thus, "now, lordes, god yow see!"
The proudest of thise ryotoures three
Answerde agayn, "what? carl, with sory grace, 255
Why artow al forwrapped save thy face?

225. **Henne over a myle**, hence about a mile. 226. **hyne**, peasant. 228. **avysed**, forehanded. 233. **digne**, worthy. 234. **al ones**, together, as one. 235. **til**, to. 240. **her trouthes plight**, "made their oaths." 248. **hente**, catch. 252. **grette**, greeted. 255. **carl**, churl. **with sory grace**, bad luck to you. 256. **forwrapped**, wrapped up.

Why livestow so longe in so greet age?"
This olde man gan loke in his visage,
And seyde thus, "for I ne can nat finde
A man, though that I walked in-to Inde,
Neither in citee nor in no village, 261
That wolde chaunge his youthe for myn age;
And therfore moot I han myn age stille,
As longe time as it is goddes wille.
Ne deeth, allas! ne wol nat han my lyf;
Thus walke I, lyk a restelees caityf, 266
And on the ground, which is my modres gate,
I knokke with my staf, bothe erly and late,
And seye, 'leve moder, leet me in!
Lo, how I vanish, flesh, and blood, and skin! 270
Allas! whan shul my bones been at reste?
Moder, with yow wolde I chaunge my cheste,
That in my chambre longe tyme hath be,
Ye! for an heyre clout to wrappe me!'
But yet to me she wol nat do that grace,
For which ful pale and welked is my face. 276
But, sirs, to yow it is no curteisye
To speken to an old man vileinye,
But he trespasse in worde, or elles in dede.
In holy writ ye may your-self wel rede,
'Agayns an old man, hoor upon his heed,
Ye sholde aryse'; wherfor I yeve yow reed, 282
Ne dooth un-to an old man noon harm now,
Na-more than ye wolde men dide to yow
In age, if that ye so longe abyde; 285
And god be with yow, wher ye go or ryde.
I moot go thider as I have to go."
"Nay, olde cherl, by god, thou shalt nat so,"
Seyde this other hasardour anon;
"Thou partest nat so lightly, by seint John!
Thou spak right now of thilke traitour Deeth,
That in this contree alle our frendes sleeth.
Have heer my trouthe, as thou art his aspye,
Tel wher he is, or thou shalt it abye,
By god, and by the holy sacrament! 295
For soothly thou art oon of his assent,
To sleen us yonge folk, thou false theef!"
"Now, sirs," quod he, "if that yow be so leef
To finde Deeth, turne up this croked wey,
For in that grove I lafte him, by my fey, 300
Under a tree, and ther he wol abyde;
Nat for your boost he wol him no-thing hyde.
See ye that ook? right ther ye shul him finde.
God save yow, that boghte agayn man-kinde,
And yow amende!"—thus seyde this olde man. 305
And everich of thise ryotoures ran,
Til he cam to that tree, and ther they founde
Of florins fyne of golde y-coyned rounde
Wel ny an eighte busshels, as hem thoughte.
No lenger thanne after Deeth they soughte, 310
But ech of hem so glad was of that sighte,
For that the florins been so faire and brighte,
That doun they sette hem by this pre-cious hord.
The worste of hem he spake the firste word.
"Brethren," quod he, "tak kepe what I seye; 315
My wit is greet, though that I bourde and pleye.
This tresor hath fortune un-to us yiven,
In mirthe and jolitee our lyf to liven,
And lightly as it comth, so wol we spende.

262. **chaunge**, exchange 265. **ne**, not even. 266. **caityf**, wretch, captive. 269. **leve**, dear. 272. **Moder**, etc., "mother, I'll exchange the chest" (holding my worldly goods). 274. **Ye**, etc., "yes, for a hair shroud in which to wrap myself." 276. **welked**, withered. 279. **But he trespasse**, "unless he overstep." 281. **Agayns**, before (Leviticus, xix, 32). 282. **reed**, advice. 286. **wher ye go or ryde**, whether you walk or ride.

293. **aspye**, spy, confederate. 294. **It abye**, pay for it. 296. **assent**, opinion. 298. **leef**, desirous. 300. **fey**, faith. 304. **boghte**, redeemed. 308. **florin**, a coin worth about $1.60. 315. **tak kepe**, heed. 316. **bourde**, jest.

Ey! goddes precious dignitee! who wende 320
To-day, that we sholde han so fair a grace?
But mighte this gold be caried fro this place
Hoom to myn hous, or elles un-to youres—
For wel ye woot that al this gold is oures—
Than were we in heigh felicitee. 325
But trewely, by daye it may nat be;
Men wolde seyn that we were theves stronge,
And for our owene tresor doon us honge.
This tresor moste y-caried be by nighte
As wysly and as slyly as it mighte. 330
Wherfore I rede that cut among us alle
Be drawe, and lat see wher the cut wol falle;
And he that hath the cut with herte blythe
Shal renne to the toune, and that ful swythe,
And bringe us breed and wyn ful prively.
And two of us shul kepen subtilly 336
This tresor wel; and, if he wol nat tarie,
Whan it is night, we wol this tresor carie
By oon assent, wher-as us thinketh best."
That oon of hem the cut broughte in his fest, 340
And bad hem drawe, and loke wher it wol falle;
And it fil on the yongeste of hem alle;
And forth toward the toun he wente anon.
And al-so sone as that he was gon,
That oon of hem spak thus un-to that other, 345
"Thou knowest wel thou art my sworne brother,
Thy profit wol I telle thee anon.
Thou woost wel that our felawe is agon;
And heer is gold, and that ful greet plentee,
That shal departed been among us three.
But natheles, if I can shape it so 351
That it departed were among us two,

320. **wende**, supposed. 328. **doon us honge**, "cause us to be hanged." 331. **cut**, lot. 334. **swythe**, quickly. 336. **subtilly**, secretly. 340. **fest**, fist. 348. **woost**, knowest. 350. **departed**, divided.

Hadde I nat doon a freendes torn to thee?"
That other answerde, "I noot how that may be;
He woot how that the gold is with us tweye, 355
What shal we doon, what shal we to him seye?"
"Shal it be conseil?" seyde the firste shrewe,
"And I shal tellen thee, in wordes fewe,
What we shal doon, and bringe it wel aboute."
"I graunte," quod that other, "out of doute, 360
That, by my trouthe, I wol thee nat biwreye."
"Now," quod the firste, "thou woost wel we be tweye,
And two of us shul strenger be than oon.
Look whan that he is set, and right anoon
Arys, as though thou woldest with him pleye; 365
And I shal ryve him thurgh the sydes tweye
Whyl that thou strogelest with him as in game,
And with thy dagger look thou do the same;
And than shal al this gold departed be,
My dere freend, bitwixen me and thee;
Than may we bothe our lustes al fulfille,
And pleye at dees right at our owene wille." 372
And thus acorded been thise shrewes tweye
To sleen the thridde, as ye han herd me seye.
This yongest, which that wente un-to the toun, 375
Ful ofte in herte he rolleth up and doun
The beautee of thise florins newe and brighte.
"O lord!" quod he, "if so were that I mighte
Have al this tresor to my-self allone,
Ther is no man that liveth under the trone 380
Of god, that sholde live so mery as I!"

354. **noot**, do not know. 357. **conseil**, secret. **shrewe**, scoundrel. 359. **bringe it wel aboute**, be successful. 361. **biwreye**, betray. 366. **ryve**, pierce, stab. 367. **game**, play, sport. 371. **lustes**, desires. 373. **acorded**, agreed. 376. **rolleth up and doun**, thinks over.

And atte laste the feend, our enemy,
Putte in his thought that he shold poyson beye,
With which he mighte sleen his felawes tweye;
For-why the feend fond him in swich lyvinge, 385
That he had leve him to sorwe bringe,
For this was outrely his fulle entente
To sleen hem bothe, and never to repente.
And forth he gooth, no lenger wolde he tarie,
Into the toun, un-to a pothecarie, 390
And preyed him, that he him wolde selle
Som poyson, that he mighte his rattes quelle;
And eek ther was a polcat in his hawe,
That, as he seyde, his capouns hadde y-slawe,
And fayn he wolde wreke him, if he mighte, 395
On vermin, that destroyed him by nighte.
The pothecarie answerde, "and thou shalt have
A thing that, al-so god my soule save,
In al this world ther nis no creature,
That ete or dronke hath of this confiture 400
Noght but the mountance of a corn of whete,
That he ne shal his lyf anon forlete;
Ye, sterve he shal, and that in lasse whyle
Than thou wolt goon a paas nat but a myle;
This poyson is so strong and violent." 405
This cursed man hath in his hond y-hent
This poyson in a box, and sith he ran
In-to the nexte strete, un-to a man,
And borwed [of] him large botels three;
And in the two his poyson poured he; 410

383. **beye**, buy. 385. **For-why**, etc., "because the devil found him living so." 386. **he had leve**, etc., "he had permission to bring him to sorrow." The sins of the young man brought him within the power of the devil. 387. **outrely**, utterly. 392. **quelle**, kill. 393. **polcat in his hawe**, "a skunk in his chicken yard." 395. **wreke**, avenge. 400. **confiture**, mixture. 401. **mountance**, amount. **corn**, kernel. 402. **anon forlete**, "straightway forsake." 403. **sterve**, die. 404. **goon a paas**, walk at a foot-pace. 407. **sith**, afterwards.

The thridde he kepte clene for his drinke.
For al the night he shoop him for to swinke
In caryinge of the gold out of that place.
And whan this ryotour, with sory grace,
Had filled with wyn his grete botels three, 415
To his felawes agayn repaireth he.
What nedeth it to sermone of it more?
For right as they had cast his deeth bifore,
Right so they han him slayn, and that anon.
And whan that this was doon, thus spak that oon, 420
"Now lat us sitte and drinke, and make us merie,
And afterward we wol his body berie."
And with that word it happed him, par cas,
To take the botel ther the poyson was,
And drank, and yaf his felawe drinke also, 425
For which anon they storven bothe two.
But, certes, I suppose that Avicen
Wroot never in no canon, ne in no fen,
Mo wonder signes of empoisoning
Than hadde thise wrecches two, er hir ending. 430
Thus ended been thise homicydes two,
And eek the false empoysoner also.
O cursed sinne, ful of cursednesse!
O traytours homicyde, o wikkednesse!
O glotonye, luxurie, and hasardrye! 435
Thou blasphemour of Crist with vileinye
And othes grete, of usage and of pryde!
Allas! mankinde, how may it bityde,

412. **shoop him**, intended. **swinke**, work. 418. **cast**, planned. 423. **par cas**, by chance. 426. **storven**, died. 427. **Avicen**, a famous Arabian physician of the eleventh century, who wrote on medicine. 428. **canon**, the whole of Avicen's work. **fen**, a section or chapter. 431. **Thus ended**, etc. Compare this climax with that of "Bert Kessler" in *Spoon River Anthology* (page 328 of this book). 437. **usage**, custom. 438. **bityde**, chance.

That to thy creatour which that thee wroghte,
And with his precious herte-blood thee boghte, 440
Thou art so fals and so unkinde, allas!
Now, goode men, god forgeve yow your trespas,
And ware yow fro the sinne of avaryce.
Myn holy pardoun may yow alle waryce,
So that ye offre nobles or sterlinges, 445
Or elles silver broches, spones, ringes.
Boweth your heed under this holy bulle!
Cometh up, ye wyves, offreth of your wolle!
Your name I entre heer in my rolle anon;
In-to the blisse of hevene shul ye gon; 450
I yow assoile, by myn heigh power,
Yow that wol offre, as clene and eek as cleer
As ye were born; and, lo, sirs, thus I preche.
And Jesu Crist, that is our soules leche,
So graunte yow his pardon to receyve; 455
For that is best; I wol yow nat deceyve.
But sirs, o word forgat I in my tale,
I have relikes and pardon in my male,
As faire as any man in Engelond,
Whiche were me yeven by the popes hond 460
If any of yow wol, of devocioun,
Offren, and han myn absolucioun,
Cometh forth anon, and kneleth heer adoun,
And mekely receyveth my pardoun:
Or elles, taketh pardon as ye wende, 465
Al newe and fresh, at every tounes ende,
So that ye offren alwey newe and newe
Nobles and pens, which that be gode and trewe.
It is an honour to everich that is heer,

442. **trespas**, sin. 443. **ware**, shield. 444. **waryce**, heal. 445. **noble**, an English coin worth about two dollars. **sterlinge**, a silver coin of slight value. 451. **assoile**, absolve. 454. **leche**, healer. 458. **male**, wallet. 465. **wende**, go.

That ye mowe have a suffisant pardoneer 470
T'assoille yow, in contree as ye ryde,
For aventures which that may bityde.
Peraventure ther may falle oon or two
Doun of his hors, and breke his nekke atwo.
Look which a seuretee is it to yow alle 475
That I am in your felaweship y-falle,
That may assoille yow, bothe more and lasse,
Whan that the soule shal fro the body passe.
I rede that our hoste heer shal biginne,
For he is most envoluped in sinne. 480
Com forth, sir hoste, and offre first anon,
And thou shalt kisse the reliks everichon,
Ye, for a grote! unbokel anon thy purs."
"Nay, nay," quod he, "than have I Cristes curs!
Lat be," quod he, "it shal nat be, so thee'ch!" 485

. . . . . .

This pardoner answerde nat a word;
So wrooth he was, no word ne wolde he seye. 495
"Now," quod our host, "I wol no lenger pleye
With thee, ne with noon other angry man."
But right anon the worthy Knight bigan,
Whan that he saugh that al the peple lough,
"Na-more of this, for it is right y-nough;
Sir Pardoner, be glad and mery of chere; 501
And ye, sir host, that been to me so dere,
I prey yow that ye kisse the Pardoner.
And Pardoner, I prey thee, drawe thee neer,
And, as we diden, lat us laughe and pleye." 505
Anon they kiste, and riden forth hir weye.

c. 1387-1400

483. **grote**, an English coin worth eight cents. 485. **so thee'ch**, so may I thrive.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE
(1772-1834)

CHRISTABEL

Note

Coleridge had a remarkable ability for making supernatural situations seem real. In *Christabel* he took a folklore tradition and so treated it as to bring out its supernatural element. In spite of the fact that the locality is Westmorland, and all the localities mentioned are well known, Coleridge casts a veil of mystery and foreboding over the entire poem. Many touches bring out the fact that Geraldine is a spirit of evil—the dog's barking, Geraldine's inability to enter the castle unless Christabel brings her in, and the flaring up of the fire as she passes by, just as a supernatural blaze appeared when Beowulf killed Grendel's mother. Coleridge intended to complete the poem in six parts, causing Bracy the bard eventually to put Geraldine to flight, but he wrote only the first two parts.

PART I

'Tis the middle of night by the castle clock,
And the owls have awakened the crowing cock,
Tu—whit!—Tu—whoo!
And hark, again! the crowing cock,
How drowsily it crew. 5

Sir Leoline, the baron rich,
Hath a toothless mastiff, which
From her kennel beneath the rock
Maketh answer to the clock,
Four for the quarters, and twelve for the hour; 10
Ever and aye, by shine and shower,
Sixteen short howls, not over loud;
Some say she sees my lady's shroud.

Is the night chilly and dark?
The night is chilly, but not dark. 15
The thin gray cloud is spread on high;
It covers but not hides the sky.
The moon is behind, and at the full;
And yet she looks both small and dull.
The night is chill, the cloud is gray; 20
'Tis a month before the month of May,
And the spring comes slowly up this way.

The lovely lady, Christabel,
Whom her father loves so well,
What makes her in the wood so late, 25
A furlong from the castle gate?
She had dreams all yesternight
Of her own betrothéd knight;
And she in the midnight wood will pray
For the weal of her lover that's far away. 30

She stole along, she nothing spoke,
The sighs she heaved were soft and low,
And naught was green upon the oak
But moss and rarest mistletoe;
She kneels beneath the huge oak tree,
And in silence prayeth she. 36

The lady sprang up suddenly,
The lovely lady, Christabel!
It moaned as near, as near can be
But what it is she cannot tell— 40
On the other side it seems to be
Of the huge, broad-breasted, old oak tree.

The night is chill; the forest bare;
Is it the wind that moaneth bleak?
There is not wind enough in the air 45
To move away the ringlet curl
From the lovely lady's cheek—
There is not wind enough to twirl
The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
That dances as often as dance it can, 50
Hanging so light, and hanging so high,
On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky.
Hush, beating heart of Christabel!
Jesu, Maria, shield her well!
She folded her arms beneath her cloak,
And stole to the other side of the oak.
What sees she there? 57

There she sees a damsel bright,
Dressed in a silken robe of white,
That shadowy in the moonlight shone; 60
The neck that made the white robe wan,
Her stately neck, and arms were bare;
Her blue-veined feet unsandaled were,

26. **furlong**, about one-eighth of a mile.

And wildly glittered here and there
The gems entangled in her hair. 65
I guess 'twas frightful there to see
A lady so richly clad as she—
Beautiful exceedingly!

"Mary Mother, save me now!"
—Said Christabel—"And who art thou?" 70

The lady strange made answer meet,
And her voice was faint and sweet:
"Have pity on my sore distress,
I scarce can speak for weariness; 74
Stretch forth thy hand, and have no fear."
—Said Christabel,—"How camest thou here?"
And the lady, whose voice was faint and sweet,
Did thus pursue her answer meet:

"My sire is of a noble line,
And my name is Geraldine. 80
Five warriors seized me yestermorn,
Me, even me, a maid forlorn;
They choked my cries with force and fright,
And tied me on a palfrey white.
The palfrey was as fleet as wind, 85
And they rode furiously behind.
They spurred amain, their steeds were white;
And once we crossed the shade of night.
As sure as Heaven shall rescue me,
I have no thought what men they be;
Nor do I know how long it is— 91
For I have lain entranced, I wis—
Since one, the tallest of the five,
Took me from the palfrey's back,
A weary woman, scarce alive. 95
Some muttered words his comrades spoke
He placed me underneath this oak;
He swore they would return with haste;
Whither they went I cannot tell—
I thought I heard, some minutes past,
Sounds as of a castle bell. 101
Stretch forth thy hand"—thus ended she—
"And help a wretched maid to flee."

71. **meet**, suitable. 85. **palfrey**, small horse. 92. **I wis**, I believe.

Then Christabel stretched forth her hand,
And comforted fair Geraldine: 105
"Oh, well, bright dame, may you command
The service of Sir Leoline;
And gladly our stout chivalry
Will he send forth, and friends withal,
To guide and guard you safe and free 110
Home to your noble father's hall."

She rose; and forth with steps they past
That strove to be, and were not, fast.
Her gracious stars the lady blessed,
And thus spake on sweet Christabel: 115
"All our household are at rest,
The hall as silent as the cell;
Sir Leoline is weak in health,
And may not well awakened be,
But we will move as if in stealth; 120
And I beseech your courtesy,
This night, to share your couch with me."

They crossed the moat, and Christabel
Took the key that fitted well;
A little door she opened straight, 125
All in the middle of the gate;
The gate that was ironed within and without,
Where an army in battle array had marched out.
The lady sank, belike through pain,
And Christabel with might and main 130
Lifted her up, a weary weight,
Over the threshold of the gate.
Then the lady rose again,
And moved, as she were not in pain.

So, free from danger, free from fear, 135
They crossed the court; right glad they were.
And Christabel devoutly cried
To the lady by her side,
"Praise we the Virgin all divine,
Who hath rescued thee from thy distress!" 140

129. **The lady sank**, etc. It was believed that witches could not enter a house unless invited. Cf. the entrance of the fairy child in Yeats's *The Land of Heart's Desire* (page II-272, line 250).

"Alas, alas!" said Geraldine,
"I cannot speak for weariness."
So, free from danger, free from fear,
They crossed the court; right glad they were.

Outside her kennel the mastiff old 145
Lay fast asleep, in moonshine cold.
The mastiff old did not awake,
Yet she an angry moan did make!
And what can ail the mastiff bitch?
Never till now she uttered yell 150
Beneath the eye of Christabel.
Perhaps it is the owlet's scritch;
For what can ail the mastiff bitch?

They passed the hall, that echoes still,
Pass as lightly as you will! 155
The brands were flat, the brands were dying,
Amid their own white ashes lying;
But when the lady passed, there came
A tongue of light, a fit of flame;
And Christabel saw the lady's eye, 160
And nothing else saw she thereby,
Save the boss of the shield of Sir Leoline tall,
Which hung in a murky old niche in the wall.
"Oh, softly tread," said Christabel,
"My father seldom sleepeth well." 165

Sweet Christabel her feet doth bare,
And, jealous of the listening air,
They steal their way from stair to stair,
Now in glimmer, and now in gloom,
And now they pass the baron's room, 170
As still as death, with stifled breath!
And now have reached her chamber door;
And now doth Geraldine press down
The rushes of the chamber floor.

The moon shines dim in the open air, 175
And not a moonbeam enters here.
But they without its light can see
The chamber carved so curiously,
Carved with figures strange and sweet,
All made out of the carver's brain, 180
For a lady's chamber meet.
The lamp with twofold silver chain
Is fastened to an angel's feet.

The silver lamp burns dead and dim;
But Christabel the lamp will trim. 185
She trimmed the lamp, and made it bright,
And left it swinging to and fro,
While Geraldine, in wretched plight,
Sank down upon the floor below.

"O weary lady, Geraldine, 190
I pray you, drink this cordial wine!
It is a wine of virtuous powers;
My mother made it of wild flowers."

"And will your mother pity me,
Who am a maiden most forlorn?" 195
Christabel answered—"Woe is me!
She died the hour that I was born.
I have heard the gray-haired friar tell
How on her deathbed she did say
That she should hear the castle-bell 200
Strike twelve upon my wedding-day.
O mother dear! that thou wert here!"
"I would," said Geraldine, "she were!"
But soon with altered voice said she—
"Off, wandering mother! Peak and pine!
I have power to bid thee flee." 206
Alas! what ails poor Geraldine?
Why stares she with unsettled eye?
Can she the bodiless dead espy?
And why with hollow voice cries she, 210
"Off, woman, off! this hour is mine—
Though thou her guardian spirit be,
Off, woman, off! 'tis given to me."

Then Christabel knelt by the lady's side,
And raised to heaven her eyes so blue—
"Alas!" said she, "this ghastly ride—216
Dear lady! it hath wildered you!"
The lady wiped her moist, cold brow,
And faintly said, "'Tis over now!"

Again the wild-flower wine she drank; 220
Her fair large eyes 'gan glitter bright,
And from the floor whereon she sank,
The lofty lady stood upright;
She was most beautiful to see,
Like a lady of a far countrée. 225

142. **I cannot speak.** The witch could not say "Amen." 152. **scritch,** screech. 159. **A tongue of light.** Cf. *Beowulf*, page 32, line 2. 162. **boss,** a metal plate at the center of a shield.

And thus the lofty lady spake—
"All they who live in the upper sky
Do love you, holy Christabel!
And you love them, and for their sake
And for the good which me befell, 230
Even I in my degree will try,
Fair maiden, to requite you well.
But now unrobe yourself; for I
Must pray, ere yet in bed I lie."

Quoth Christabel, "So let it be!" 235
And as the lady bade, did she.
Her gentle limbs did she undress,
And lay down in her loveliness.

But through her brain of weal and woe
So many thoughts moved to and fro 240
That vain it were her lids to close;
So halfway from the bed she rose,
And on her elbow did recline
To look at the lady Geraldine.

Beneath the lamp the lady bowed, 245
And slowly rolled her eyes around;
Then drawing in her breath aloud,
Like one that shuddered, she unbound
The cincture from beneath her breast:
Her silken robe and inner vest, 250
Dropped to her feet, and full in view,
Behold! her bosom and half her side—
A sight to dream of, not to tell!
Oh, shield her! shield sweet Christabel!

Yet Geraldine nor speaks nor stirs; 255
Ah! what a stricken look was hers!
Deep from within she seems halfway
To lift some weight with sick assay,
And eyes the maid and seeks delay;
Then suddenly, as one defied, 260
Collects herself in scorn and pride,
And lay down by the maiden's side!—
And in her arms the maid she took,
Ah, well-a-day!
And with low voice and doleful look 265
These words did say:

"In the touch of this bosom there worketh a spell,
Which is lord of thy utterance, Christabel!
Thou knowest tonight, and wilt know tomorrow,
This mark of my shame, this seal of my sorrow; 270
But vainly thou warrest,
For this is alone in
Thy power to declare,
That in the dim forest
Thou heard'st a low moaning, 275
And found'st a bright lady, surpassingly fair;
And didst bring her home with thee in love and in charity,
To shield her and shelter her from the damp air."

THE CONCLUSION TO PART I

It was a lovely sight to see
The lady Christabel when she 280
Was praying at the old oak tree,
Amid the jagged shadows
Of mossy, leafless boughs,
Kneeling in the moonlight,
To make her gentle vows; 285
Her slender palms together pressed,
Heaving sometimes on her breast;
Her face resigned to bliss or bale—
Her face, oh, call it fair, not pale,
And both blue eyes more bright than clear, 290
Each about to have a tear.

With open eyes (ah, woe is me!)
Asleep, and dreaming fearfully,
Fearfully dreaming, yet I wis,
Dreaming that alone, which is— 295
O sorrow and shame! Can this be she,
The lady who knelt at the old oak tree?
And lo! the worker of these harms,
That holds the maiden in her arms,
Seems to slumber still and mild, 300
As a mother with her child.

A star hath set, a star hath risen,
O Geraldine! since arms of thine
Have been the lovely lady's prison.
O Geraldine! one hour was thine— 305
Thou'st had thy will! By tairn and rill,
The night-birds all that hour were still.
But now they are jubilant anew,
From cliff and tower, tu—whoo! tu—whoo!
Tu—whoo! tu—whoo! from wood and fell!

249. **cincture**, girdle. 258. **assay**, attempt.

306. **tairn**, pond, 310. **fell**, upland moor, hill.

And see! the lady Christabel
Gathers herself from out her trance;
Her limbs relax, her countenance
Grows sad and soft; the smooth thin lids
Close o'er her eyes; and tears she sheds—
Large tears that leave the lashes bright! 316
And oft the while she seems to smile
As infants at a sudden light!

Yea, she doth smile, and she doth weep,
Like a youthful hermitess, 320
Beauteous in a wilderness,
Who, praying always, prays in sleep.
And if she move unquietly,
Perchance 'tis but the blood so free
Comes back and tingles in her feet. 325
No doubt she hath a vision sweet.
What if her guardian spirit 'twere?
What if she knew her mother near?
But this she knows, in joys and woes,
That saints will aid if men will call—
For the blue sky bends over all! 331

PART II

"Each matin bell," the Baron saith,
"Knells us back to a world of death."
These words Sir Leoline first said
When he rose and found his lady dead.
These words Sir Leoline will say 336
Many a morn to his dying day!

And hence the custom and law began
That still at dawn the sacristan,
Who duly pulls the heavy bell, 340
Five and forty beads must tell
Between each stroke—a warning knell,
Which not a soul can choose but hear
From Bratha Head to Wyndermere.

Saith Bracy the bard, "So let it knell! 345
And let the drowsy sacristan
Still count as slowly as he can!
There is no lack of such, I ween,

332. **matin bell**, which calls to morning prayer. 339. **sacristan**, sexton in charge of sacristy where sacred vestments and utensils of a church or chapel are kept. 341. **Five and forty**, etc., "must say forty-five prayers," since each bead on the rosary represented a prayer. 344. **Bratha Head**, etc. The localities mentioned hereafter are in the mountains of Westmorland and Cumberland. Wyndermere (now spelled Windermere) is a beautiful lake south of Rydal Water and Grasmere, where Wordsworth lived. The places named will all be found on any map of the Lake District.

As will fill up the space between.
In Langdale Pike and Witch's Lair, 350
And Dungeon-ghyll so foully rent,
With ropes of rock and bells of air
Three sinful sextons' ghosts are pent,
Who all give back, one after t'other,
The death-note to their living brother;
And oft, too, by the knell offended, 356
Just as their one! two! three! is ended,
The devil mocks the doleful tale
With a merry peal from Borrowdale."

The air is still! through mist and cloud
That merry peal comes ringing loud; 361
And Geraldine shakes off her dread,
And rises lightly from the bed;
Puts on her silken vestments white,
And tricks her hair in lovely plight; 365
And nothing doubting of her spell
Awakens the lady Christabel.
"Sleep you, sweet lady Christabel?
I trust that you have rested well."

And Christabel awoke and spied 370
The same who lay down by her side—
Oh, rather say, the same whom she
Raised up beneath the old oak tree!
Nay, fairer yet! and yet more fair!
For she belike hath drunken deep 375
Of all the blessedness of sleep!
And while she spake, her looks, her air,
Such gentle thankfulness declare,
That (so it seemed) her girded vests
Grew tight beneath her heaving breasts. 380
"Sure I have sinned!" said Christabel;
"Now heaven be praised if all be well!"
And in long faltering tones, yet sweet,
Did she the lofty lady greet
With such perplexity of mind 385
As dreams too lively leave behind.

So quickly she rose, and quickly arrayed
Her maiden limbs, and having prayed
That He, who on the cross did groan,
Might wash away her sins unknown, 390
She forthwith led fair Geraldine
To meet her sire, Sir Leoline.

The lovely maid and the lady tall
Are pacing both into the hall,

349. **the space between.** A remarkable echo exists in this valley. Bracy refers to the echo as being caused by dead sextons pulling ghostly bells. 353. **pent**, confined.

And, pacing on through page and groom, 395
Enter the Baron's presence-room.

The Baron rose, and while he pressed
His gentle daughter to his breast,
With cheerful wonder in his eyes
The lady Geraldine espies, 400
And gave such welcome to the same
As might beseem so bright a dame!

But when he heard the lady's tale,
And when she told her father's name,
Why waxed Sir Leoline so pale, 405
Murmuring o'er the name again,
Lord Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine?

Alas! they had been friends in youth;
But whispering tongues can poison truth;
And constancy lives in realms above; 410
And life is thorny; and youth is vain;
And to be wroth with one we love
Doth work like madness in the brain.
And thus it chanced, as I divine,
With Roland and Sir Leoline. 415
Each spake words of high disdain
And insult to his heart's best brother.
They parted—ne'er to meet again!
But never either found another 419
To free the hollow heart from paining—
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder
A dreary sea now flows between.
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder
Shall wholly do away, I ween, 425
The marks of that which once hath been.

Sir Leoline, a moment's space,
Stood gazing on the damsel's face;
And the youthful Lord of Tryermaine
Came back upon his heart again. 430

O then the Baron forgot his age;
His noble heart swelled high with rage;
He swore by the wounds in Jesu's side
He would proclaim it far and wide,
With trump and solemn heraldry, 435
That they who thus had wronged the dame
Were base as spotted infamy!
"And if they dare deny the same,
My herald shall appoint a week,
And let the recreant traitors seek 440
My tourney court—that there and then
I may dislodge their reptile souls
From the bodies and forms of men!"
He spake; his eye in lightning rolls!
For the lady was ruthlessly seized; and he kenned 445
In the beautiful lady the child of his friend!

And now the tears were on his face,
And fondly in his arms he took
Fair Geraldine, who met the embrace
Prolonging it with a joyous look. 450
Which when she viewed, a vision fell
Upon the soul of Christabel,
The vision of fear, the touch and pain!
She shrunk and shuddered, and saw again—
(Ah, woe is me! Was it for thee, 455
Thou gentle maid! such sights to see?)
Again she saw that bosom old,
Again she felt that bosom cold,
And drew in her breath with a hissing sound;
Whereat the Knight turned wildly round, 460
And nothing saw but his own sweet maid
With eyes upraised, as one that prayed.

The touch, the sight, had passed away,
And in its stead that vision blest,
Which comforted her after-rest, 465
While in the lady's arms she lay,
Had put a rapture in her breast,
And on her lips and o'er her eyes
Spread smiles like light!
With new surprise,
"What ails then my beloved child?" 470
The Baron said.—His daughter mild
Made answer, "All will yet be well!"
I ween, she had no power to tell
Aught else—so mighty was the spell.

Yet he, who saw this Geraldine, 475
Had deemed her sure a thing divine,
Such sorrow with such grace she blended,
As if she feared she had offended
Sweet Christabel, that gentle maid!
And with such lowly tones she prayed

441. **tourney court**, a place for knightly justing. The knight refers to trial by battle in which he will avenge the wrong done to Geraldine. 445. **kenned**, recognized. 473. **ween**, believe.

She might be sent without delay 481
Home to her father's mansion.
"Nay!
Nay, by my soul!" said Leoline.
"Ho! Bracy the bard, the charge be thine!
Go thou, with music sweet and loud, 485
And take two steeds with trappings proud,
And take the youth whom thou lov'st best
To bear thy harp, and learn thy song,
And clothe you both in solemn vest,
And over the mountains haste along, 490
Lest wandering folk, that are abroad,
Detain you on the valley road.

And when he has crossed the Irthing flood,
My merry bard! he hastes, he hastes
Up Knorren Moor, through Halegarth Wood, 495
And reaches soon that castle good
Which stands and threatens Scotland's wastes.

Bard Bracy! bard Bracy! your horses are fleet,
Ye must ride up the hall, your music so sweet,
More loud than your horses' echoing feet! 500
And loud and loud to Lord Roland call,
Thy daughter is safe in Langdale hall!
Thy beautiful daughter is safe and free—
Sir Leoline greets thee thus through me.
He bids thee come without delay 505
With all thy numerous array;
And take thy lovely daughter home;
And he will meet thee on the way
With all his numerous array
White with their panting palfreys' foam. 510
And, by mine honor! I will say
That I repent me of the day
When I spake words of fierce disdain
To Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine!
—For since that evil hour hath flown,
Many a summer's sun hath shone; 516
Yet ne'er found I a friend again
Like Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine."

The lady fell, and clasped his knees,
Her face upraised, her eyes o'erflowing;
And Bracy replied with faltering voice,
His gracious Hail on all bestowing: 522
"Thy words, thou sire of Christabel,
Are sweeter than my harp can tell;
Yet might I gain a boon of thee, 525
This day my journey should not be;
So strange a dream hath come to me
That I had vowed with music loud
To clear yon wood from thing unblest,
Warned by a vision in my rest! 530
For in my sleep I saw that dove,
That gentle bird, whom thou dost love,
And call'st by thy own daughter's name—
Sir Leoline! I saw the same,
Fluttering, and uttering fearful moan,
Among the green herbs in the forest alone. 536
Which when I saw and when I heard,
I wondered what might ail the bird;
For nothing near it could I see
Save the grass and green herbs underneath the old tree. 540

And in my dream, methought, I went
To search out what might there be found;
And what the sweet bird's trouble meant,
That thus lay fluttering on the ground.
I went and peered, and could descry 545
No cause for her distressful cry;
But yet for her dear lady's sake
I stooped, methought, the dove to take,
When lo! I saw a bright green snake
Coiled around its wings and neck. 550
Green as the herbs on which it couched,
Close by the dove's its head it crouched;
And with the dove it heaves and stirs,
Swelling its neck as she swelled hers!
I woke; it was the midnight hour; 555
The clock was echoing in the tower;
But though my slumber was gone by,
This dream it would not pass away—
It seems to live upon my eye!
And thence I vowed this selfsame day 560
With music strong and saintly song
To wander through the forest bare,
Lest aught unholy loiter there."

Thus Bracy said; the Baron, the while,
Half-listening heard him with a smile:

Then turned to lady Geraldine, 566
His eyes made up of wonder and love,
And said in courtly accents fine:
"Sweet maid, Lord Roland's beauteous dove,
With arms more strong than harp or song, 570
Thy sire and I will crush the snake!"
He kissed her forehead as he spake,
And Geraldine in maiden wise
Casting down her large bright eyes,
With blushing cheek and courtesy fine 575
She turned her from Sir Leoline:
Softly gathering up her train,
That o'er her right arm fell again;
And folded her arms across her chest,
And couched her head upon her breast, 580
And looked askance at Christabel—
Jesu, Maria, shield her well!

A snake's small eye blinks dull and shy,
And the lady's eyes they shrunk in her head,
Each shrunk up to a serpent's eye, 585
And with somewhat of malice, and more of dread,
At Christabel she looked askance!—
One moment—and the sight was fled!
But Christabel in dizzy trance,
Stumbling on the unsteady ground, 590
Shuddered aloud, with a hissing sound;
And Geraldine again turned round,
And like a thing that sought relief,
Full of wonder and of grief,
She rolled her large bright eyes divine 595
Wildly on Sir Leoline.

The maid, alas! her thoughts are gone,
She nothing sees—no sight but one!
The maid, devoid of guile and sin,
I know not how, in fearful wise, 600
So deeply had she drunken in
That look, those shrunken serpent eyes,
That all her features were resigned
To this sole image in her mind;
And passively did imitate 605
That look of dull and treacherous hate!
And thus she stood, in dizzy trance,
Still picturing that look askance
With forced unconscious sympathy
Full before her father's view—— 610
As far as such a look could be
In eyes so innocent and blue!

And when the trance was o'er, the maid
Paused awhile, and inly prayed.
Then falling at the Baron's feet, 615
"By my mother's soul do I entreat
That thou this woman send away!"
She said; and more she could not say.
For what she knew she could not tell,
O'ermastered by the mighty spell. 620

Why is thy cheek so wan and wild,
Sir Leoline? Thy only child
Lies at thy feet, thy joy, thy pride,
So fair, so innocent, so mild,
The same for whom thy lady died! 625
Oh, by the pangs of her dear mother,
Think thou no evil of thy child!
For her, and thee, and for no other,
She prayed the moment ere she died—
Prayed that the babe for whom she died
Might prove her dear lord's joy and pride! 631
That prayer her deadly pangs beguiled,
Sir Leoline!
And wouldst thou wrong thy only child,
Her child and thine? 635

Within the Baron's heart and brain
If thoughts, like these, had any share,
They only swelled his rage and pain,
And did but work confusion there.
His heart was cleft with pain and rage,
His cheeks they quivered, his eyes were wild, 641
Dishonored thus in his old age;
Dishonored by his only child,
And all his hospitality
To the insulted daughter of his friend
By more than woman's jealousy 646
Brought thus to a disgraceful end—
He rolled his eye with stern regard
Upon the gentle minstrel bard,
And said in tones abrupt, austere— 650
"Why, Bracy! dost thou loiter here?
I bade thee hence!" The bard obeyed;
And turning from his own sweet maid,
The aged knight, Sir Leoline,
Led forth the lady Geraldine! 655

583. **A snake's small eye**, etc. Folklore records many stories of witches with snake bodies or souls.

THE CONCLUSION TO PART II

A little child, a limber elf,
Singing, dancing to itself,
A fairy thing with red round cheeks,
That always finds, and never seeks,
Makes such a vision to the sight 660
As fills a father's eyes with light;
And pleasures flow in so thick and fast
Upon his heart, that he at last
Must needs express his love's excess
With words of unmeant bitterness. 665
Perhaps 'tis pretty to force together
Thoughts so all unlike each other;
To mutter and mock a broken charm,
To dally with wrong that does no harm.
Perhaps 'tis tender, too, and pretty 670
At each wild word to feel within
A sweet recoil of love and pity.
And what, if in a world of sin
(O sorrow and shame should this be true!)
Such giddiness of heart and brain 675
Comes seldom save from rage and pain,
So talks as it's most used to do.

(1816)

JOHN KEATS (1795-1821)

NOTE

Keats was a young apothecary, of meager education, but of unusual emotional perception, who had schooled himself in his search for beauty by long walks and by long readings of the heroic and chivalric literature of England and Europe. Keats needed a tangible object to arouse his creative impulses, for he was not an intellectual poet of abstract beauty like Shelley. Consequently it is no surprise to find him an ardent admirer of Chaucer and Spenser, of early folklore, and of medieval romance. Although, in "The Eve of St. Agnes," Keats was reproducing a story of medieval romance, he changed its spirit to suit his own purposes. In combining the legend that on the Eve of Saint Agnes' day, which is January 21, maidens might learn whom they were to marry—either by fasting, or by looking in the mirror before going to bed to see if the image of the future husband would appear, or by going to bed without speaking to anyone and thereby dreaming of the future husband—with the story of two lovers whose families were at war with each other, Keats created an episode redolent with vivid, tangible, emotional imagery. The story is told not only for itself and for the emotions which it arouses, but as an outlet for Keats's passion for beauty.

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

St. Agnes' Eve—ah, bitter chill it was!
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;
The hare limped trembling through the frozen grass,
And silent was the flock in woolly fold.
Numb were the Beadsman's fingers, while he told 5
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,
Like pious incense from a censer old,
Seemed taking flight for heaven, without a death,
Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith.

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man; 10
Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees,
And back returneth, meager, barefoot, wan,
Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees.
The sculptured dead, on each side, seem to freeze,
Imprisoned in black, purgatorial rails. 15
Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,
He passeth by; and his weak spirit fails
To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.

Northward he turneth through a little door,
And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden tongue 20
Flattered to tears this aged man and poor;
But no—already had his deathbell rung;
The joys of all his life were said and sung;
His was harsh penance on St. Agnes' Eve.

5. **Beadsman**, a man delegated to pray for the soul or souls of the dead. 16. **orat'ries**, small chapels frequently erected for commemorative purposes.

Another way he went, and soon among 25
Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,
And all night kept awake, for sinner's sake to grieve.

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude soft;
And so it chanced, for many a door was wide,
From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft, 30
The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide;
The level chambers, ready with their pride,
Were glowing to receive a thousand guests;
The carvéd angels, ever eager-eyed,
Stared, where upon their heads the cornice rests, 35
With hair blown back, and wings put crosswise on their breasts.

At length burst in the argent revelry,
With plume, tiara, and all rich array,
Numerous as shadows haunting faërily
The brain, new-stuffed, in youth, with triumphs gay 40
Of old romance. These let us wish away,
And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady there,
Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day,
On love, and winged St. Agnes' saintly care,
As she had heard old dames full many times declare. 45

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' Eve,
Young virgins might have visions of delight,
And soft adorings from their loves receive
Upon the honeyed middle of the night,
If ceremonies due they did aright; 50
As, supperless to bed they must retire,
And couch supine their beauties, lily white;

37. **argent**, silver.

Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require
Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline. 55
The music, yearning like a god in pain,
She scarcely heard; her maiden eyes divine,
Fixed on the floor, saw many a sweeping train
Pass by—she heeded not at all. In vain
Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier, 60
And back retired; not cooled by high disdain,
But she saw not—her heart was otherwhere—
She sighed for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

She danced along with vague, regardless eyes;
Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short. 65
The hallowed hour was near at hand; she sighs
Amid the timbrels and the thronged resort
Of whisperers in anger, or in sport;
Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,
Hoodwinked with faëry fancy; all amort, 70
Save to St. Agnes and her lambs unshorn,
And all the bliss to be before tomorrow morn.

So, purposing each moment to retire,
She lingered still. Meantime, across the moors,
Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire 75
For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,

67. **timbrels**, small drums or tambourines. 70. **amort**, lifeless, spiritless. 71. **lambs unshorn.** For centuries, on the feast of St. Agnes, January 21, during the singing of the *Agnus Dei* in her Church in Rome, two unshorn lambs have been presented by the nuns to representatives of the Pope. Later in the year the lambs are shorn, and their wool, after it has been consecrated, is woven by the nuns into *pallia*, or small neck-bands, each with two pendants, worn by all dignitaries of the Roman Catholic Church above the rank of bishop.

Buttressed from moonlight, stands he, and implores
All saints to give him sight of Madeline,
But for one moment in the tedious hours,
That he might gaze and worship all unseen; 80
Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss—in sooth such things have been.

He ventures in; let no buzzed whisper tell;
All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords
Will storm his heart, Love's fev'rous citadel.
For him those chambers held barbarian hordes, 85
Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,
Whose very dogs would execrations howl
Against his lineage; not one breast affords
Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,
Save one old beldame, weak in body and in soul. 90

Ah, happy chance! the aged creature came,
Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,
To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame,
Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond
The sound of merriment and chorus bland. 95
He startled her; but soon she knew his face,
And grasped his fingers in her palsied hand,
Saying, "Mercy, Porphyro! hie thee from this place;
They are all here tonight, the whole blood-thirsty race!

"Get hence! get hence! there's dwarfish Hildebrand; 100
He had a fever late, and in the fit
He curséd thee and thine, both house and land;
Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit
More tame for his gray hairs—alas me! flit!
Flit like a ghost away." "Ah, Gossip dear, 105
We're safe enough; here in this arm-chair sit,
And tell me how"—"Good Saints! not here, not here;
Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy bier."

He followed through a lowly archéd way,
Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume; 110
And as she muttered, "Well-a—well-a-day!"
He found him in a little moonlight room,
Pale, latticed, chill, and silent as a tomb.
"Now tell me where is Madeline," said he,
"O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom 115
Which none but secret sisterhood may see,
When they St. Agnes' wool are weaving piously."

"St. Agnes! Ah! it is St. Agnes' Eve—
Yet men will murder upon holy days; 119
Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve,
And be liege-lord of all the elves and fays,
To venture so; it fills me with amaze
To see thee, Porphyro!—St. Agnes' Eve!
God's help! my lady fair the conjuror plays
This very night; good angels her deceive! 125
But let me laugh awhile, I've mickle time to grieve."

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,
While Porphyro upon her face doth look,
Like puzzled urchin on an aged crone
Who keepeth closed a wond'rous riddle-book, 130
As spectacled she sits in chimney nook.
But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told
His lady's purpose; and he scarce could brook
Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold,
And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old. 135

105. **Gossip**, good friend, a term applied to women.

126. **mickle**, much.

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose,
Flushing his brow, and in his painéd heart
Made purple riot; then doth he propose
A stratagem that makes the beldame start.
"A cruel man and impious thou art; 140
Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep, and dream
Alone with her good angels, far apart
From wicked men like thee. Go, go!—I deem
Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst seem."

"I will not harm her, by all saints I swear," 145
Quoth Porphyro. "O may I ne'er find grace
When my weak voice shall whisper its last prayer,
If one of her soft ringlets I displace,
Or look with ruffian passion in her face.
Good Angela, believe me by these tears, 150
Or I will, even in a moment's space,
Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen's ears,
And beard them, though they be more fanged than wolves and bears."

"Ah! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul?
A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, churchyard thing, 155
Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll;
Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,
Were never missed." Thus plaining, doth she bring
A gentler speech from burning Porphyro;
So woeful, and of such deep sorrowing, 160
That Angela gives promise she will do
Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe—

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,
Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide

158. **plaining**, complaining.

Him in a closet, of such privacy 165
That he might see her beauty unespied,
And win perhaps that night a peerless bride,
While legioned fairies paced the coverlet,
And pale enchantment held her sleepy-eyed.
Never on such a night have lovers met, 170
Since Merlin paid his Demon all the monstrous debt.

"It shall be as thou wishest," said the Dame.
"All cates and dainties shall be storéd there
Quickly on this feast-night; by the tambour frame
Her own lute thou wilt see; no time to spare, 175
For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare
On such a catering trust my dizzy head.
Wait here, my child, with patience; kneel in prayer
The while. Ah! thou must needs the lady wed,
Or may I never leave my grave among the dead." 180

So saying, she hobbled off with busy fear.
The lover's endless minutes slowly passed;
The Dame returned, and whispered in his ear
To follow her; with aged eyes aghast
From fright of dim espial. Safe at last, 185
Through many a dusky gallery, they gain
The maiden's chamber, silken, hushed, and chaste,
Where Porphyro took covert, pleased amain.
His poor guide hurried back with agues in her brain.

171. **Merlin.** Merlin was the son of a mortal mother and a demon, and became himself a mighty magician at King Arthur's court. In his old age a fairy, Nimue, whom he loved, bound him forever by his own enchantments in the forest of Broceliande. On the night of his enchanting a terrific storm swept the forest. The monstrous debt refers to the magic lore which Merlin taught Nimue how to use. 173. **cates**, choice morsels of food. 174. **tambour frame**, embroidery frame. 188. **amain**, very well.

Her falt'ring hand upon the balustrade, 190
Old Angela was feeling for the stair,
When Madeline, St. Agnes' charméd maid,
Rose, like a missioned spirit, unaware.
With silver taper's light, and pious care,
She turned, and down the aged gossip led 195
To a safe, level matting. Now prepare,
Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed;
She comes, she comes again, like ringdove frayed and fled.

Out went the taper as she hurried in;
Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died. 200
She closed the door she panted, all akin
To spirits of the air, and visions wide;
No uttered syllable, or, woe betide!
But to her heart, her heart was voluble,
Paining with eloquence her balmy side,
As though a tongueless nightingale should swell 206
Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled, in her dell.

A casement high and triple-arched there was,
All garlanded with carven imageries
Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knotgrass, 210
And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
As are the tiger-moth's deep-damasked wings;
And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,
And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings, 215
A shielded scutcheon blushed with blood of queens and kings.

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,
As down she knelt for Heaven's grace and boon;
Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together pressed, 220
And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
And on her hair a glory, like a saint;
She seemed a splendid angel, newly dressed,
Save wings, for Heaven—Porphyro grew faint—
She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint. 225

Anon his heart revives; her vespers done,
Of all its wreathéd pearls her hair she frees,
Unclasps her warméd jewels one by one,
Loosens her fragrant bodice; by degrees
Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees. 230
Half-hidden, like a mermaid in seaweed,
Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,
In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,
But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest, 235
In sort of wakeful swoon, perplexed she lay,
Until the poppied warmth of sleep oppressed
Her soothéd limbs, and soul fatigued away;
Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day,
Blissfully havened both from joy and pain, 240
Clasped like a missal where swart Paynims pray,
Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.

Stolen to this paradise, and so entranced,
Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress,
And listened to her breathing, if it chanced 246

198. **frayed**, frightened. 206. **tongueless nightingale**. For the Greek myth of Philomela see the note on line 5, page 407. 218. **gules**, heraldic word for the color red. In heraldic engraving it is indicated by closely drawn perpendicular parallel lines.

223. **dressed**, prepared. 226. **vespers**, evening prayers. 241. **Clasped**, closed with clasps. **missal**, Mass book. **Paynims pray**. On the edges of medieval Mass books, the heathen, especially the Saracens, were depicted as kneeling, converted to the Christian faith.

To wake into a slumberous tenderness;
Which when he heard, that minute did he bless,
And breathed himself; then from the closet crept,
Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness, 250
And over the hushéd carpet, silent, stepped,
And 'tween the curtains peeped, where, lo!—how fast she slept.

Then by the bedside, where the faded moon
Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set
A table, and, half anguished, threw thereon 255
A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet.
O for some drowsy Morphean amulet!
The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,
The kettledrum, and far-heard clarionet,
Affray his ears, though but in dying tone— 260
The hall door shuts again, and all the noise is gone.

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,
In blanchéd linen, smooth, and lavendered,
While he from forth the closet brought a heap
Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd, 265
With jellies soother than the creamy curd,
And lucent sirups, tinct with cinnamon,
Manna and dates, in argosy transferred
From Fez, and spicéd dainties, every one,
From silken Samarcand to cedared Lebanon. 270

These delicates he heaped with glowing hand
On golden dishes and in baskets bright
Of wreathéd silver; sumptuous they stand
In the retiréd quiet of the night,
Filling the chilly room with perfume light. 275
"And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake!
Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite.
Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes' sake,
Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth ache."

Thus whispering, his warm, unnervéd arm 280
Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream
By the dusk curtains—'twas a midnight charm
Impossible to melt as icéd stream.
The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam;
Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies; 285
It seemed he never, never could redeem
From such a steadfast spell his lady's eyes;
So mused awhile, entoiled in wooféd phantasies.

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute—
Tumultuous—and, in chords that tenderest be, 290
He played an ancient ditty, long since mute,
In Provence called "La belle dame sans mercy";
Close to her ear touching the melody—
Wherewith disturbed, she uttered a soft moan.
He ceased—she panted quick—and suddenly 295
Her blue affrayéd eyes wide open shone;
Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptured stone.

Her eyes were open, but she still be held,
Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep;
There was a painful change, that nigh expelled 300
The blisses of her dream so pure and deep;
At which fair Madeline began to weep,
And moan forth witless words with many a sigh,
While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep,

257. **Morphean amulet**, a charmed object to induce sleep. 266. **soother**, softer, smoother. 267. **lucent**, clear. **tinct**, flavored. 268. **argosy**, a large merchant vessel. 270. **Samarcand**, once the seat of Arabic civilization, and the capital of Tamerlane. It was on the great caravan route which brought to Europe, during the Middle Ages, the riches of the East.

277. **eremite**, hermit. 288. **wooféd**. The woof is the cross thread in weaving. Here the meaning is "woven." 292. **La belle dame sans mercy**, a poem by Alain Chartier, who in the fifteenth century served Charles VII, king of France.

Who knelt, with joinéd hands and piteous eye, 305
Fearing to move or speak, she looked so dreamingly.

"Ah, Porphyro!" said she, "but even now
Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,
Made tunable with every sweetest vow;
And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear. 310
How changed thou art! how pallid, chill, and drear!
Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,
Those looks immortal, those complainings dear!
Oh, leave me not in this eternal woe,
For if thou diest, my Love, I know not where to go." 315

Beyond a mortal man impassioned far
At these voluptuous accents, he arose,
Ethereal, flushed, and like a throbbing star
Seen mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose;
Into her dream he melted, as the rose 320
Blendeth its odor with the violet—
Solution sweet; meantime the frost-wind blows
Like Love's alarum, pattering the sharp sleet
Against the windowpanes; St. Agnes' moon hath set.

'Tis dark; quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet. 325
"This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline!"
'Tis dark; the icéd gusts still rave and beat.
"No dream, alas! alas! and woe is mine!
Porphyro will leave me here to fade and pine.
Cruel! what traitor could thee hither bring? 330
I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,
Though thou forsakest a deceivéd thing,
A dove forlorn and lost with sick, unprunéd wing."

"My Madeline! sweet dreamer! lovely bride!
Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest? 335
Thy beauty's shield, heart-shaped and vermeil dyed?
Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest
After so many hours of toil and quest,
A famished pilgrim, saved by miracle.
Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest 340
Saving of thy sweet self; if thou think'st well
To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

"Hark! 'tis an elfin storm from faëry land,
Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed;
Arise—arise! the morning is at hand—
The bloated wassailers will never heed.
Let us away, my love, with happy speed;
There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see— 348
Drowned all in Rhenish and the sleepy mead.
Awake! arise! my love, and fearless be,
For o'er the southern moors I have a home for thee." 351

She hurried at his words, beset with fears,
For there were sleeping dragons all around,
At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready spears;
Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found; 355
In all the house was heard no human sound.
A chain-drooped lamp was flickering by each door;
The arras, rich with horseman, hawk, and hound,
Fluttered in the besieging wind's uproar;
And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor. 360

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall;
Like phantoms to the iron porch they glide,
Where lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl,
With a huge, empty flagon by his side.

336. **vermeil dyed**, vermilion dyed. 358. **arras**, tapestry, originally made in Arras, France.

The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook his hide, 365
But his sagacious eye an inmate owns.
By one, and one, the bolts full easy slide;
The chains lie silent on the footworn stones;
The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans.

And they are gone; aye, ages long ago 370
These lovers fled away into the storm.
That night the Baron dreamt of many a woe,
And all his warrior-guests, with shade and form
Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,
Were long be-nightmared. Angela the old 375
Died palsy-twitched, with meager face deform;
The Beadsman, after thousand aves told,
For aye unsought-for slept among his ashes cold. (1820)

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

Note

The following haunting narrative poem deals with the popular romantic subject of the knight-errant who has been enchanted by a sorceress of the woods, "a beautiful lady without compassion," a soulless creature like the Lady Geraldine of *Christabel*. Keats's poem is the quintessence of the romantic spirit and has all the fragrance of sandalwood. Its effect on the reader comes partly from the story and imagery, partly from the metrical form—notably the recurrence of the shortened fourth line in each stanza.

"O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge has withered from the lake,
And no birds sing.

"O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms! 5
So haggard and so woebegone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

"I see a lily on thy brow
With anguish moist and fever-dew, 10
And on thy cheeks a fading rose
Fast withereth, too."

"I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful—a faëry's child;
Her hair was long, her foot was light, 15
And her eyes were wild.

"I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets, too, and fragrant zone;
She looked at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan. 20

"I set her on my pacing steed
And nothing else saw all day long,
For sidelong would she bend, and sing
A faëry's song.

"She found me roots of relish sweet, 25
And honey wild and manna-dew,
And sure in language strange she said,
'I love thee true.'

"She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she wept and sighed full sore; 30
And there I shut her wild, wild eyes
With kisses four.

"And there she lulléd me asleep,
And there I dreamed—Ah! woe betide!
The latest dream I ever dreamed 35
On the cold hill's side.

"I saw pale kings and princes, too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
They cried—'La belle Dame sans Merci
Hath thee in thrall!' 40

"I saw their starved lips in the gloam
With horrid warning gapéd wide,
And I awoke and found me here
On the cold hill's side.

"And this is why I sojourn here, 45
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is withered from the lake,
And no birds sing."

(1820)

376. **deform**, deformed. 377. **aves**, prayers to the Virgin Mary, commencing, "Hail, Mary."

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON
(1809-1892)

THE LADY OF SHALOTT*

Note

On the basis of the medieval legend of Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat, who died because of her unrequited love for Lancelot, Tennyson composed this mystic narrative. Its symbolism may easily be understood.

Part I

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And through the field the road runs by
To many-towered Camelot; 5
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver, 10
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Through the wave that runs forever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.
Four gray walls, and four gray towers, 15
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veiled
Slide the heavy barges trailed 20
By slow horses; and unhailed
The shallop flitteth silken-sailed
Skimming down to Camelot.
But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand? 25
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly 30
From the river winding clearly,
Down to towered Camelot;
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers "'Tis the fairy 35
Lady of Shalott."

Part II

There she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colors gay.
She has heard a whisper say
A curse is on her if she stay 40
To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott. 45

And moving through a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot; 50
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad, 55
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-haired page in crimson clad,
Goes by to towered Camelot.
And sometimes through the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two. 61
She hath no loyal knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights, 65
For often through the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
And music, went to Camelot.
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed; 70
"I am half sick of shadows," said
The Lady of Shalott.

**Shalott.* In the original legend Astolat was a castle up the river from Winchester. Tennyson makes Shalott an enchanted tower on an island in the river.
3. **wold**, an open plain or low hill. 5. **Camelot**, a legendary city in which Arthur held court.

56. **pad**, a horse with an easy gait. 69. **Or when the moon**, etc. Tennyson indicated that the following lines explained the symbolism of the poem.

PART III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling through the leaves, 75
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Lancelot.
A red-cross knight forever kneeled
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field, 80
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glittered free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily 85
As he rode down to Camelot.
And from his blazoned baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armor rung,
Beside remote Shalott. 90

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jeweled shone the saddle-leather;
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burned like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot; 95
As often through the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glowed; 100
On burnished hooves his warhorse trode;
From underneath his helmet flowed
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river 105
He flashed into the crystal mirror,
"Tirra lirra," by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces through the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom, 111
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She looked down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror cracked from side to side; 115
"The curse is come upon me," cried
The Lady of Shalott.

PART IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining, 120
Heavily the low sky raining
Over towered Camelot;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote 125
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse
Like some bold seër in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance—
With a glassy countenance 130
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott. 135

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right—
The leaves upon her falling light—
Through the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot; 140
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy, 145
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darkened wholly,
Turned to towered Camelot.
For ere she reached upon the tide 150
The first house by the water side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery, 155

76. **greaves**, armor to protect the legs below the knees. 77. **Sir Lancelot**, the lover of Guinevere, and the most renowned of the Arthurian knights. 78. **red-cross**. The red cross was the cross of St. George of England, but the phrase inevitably recalls the Red-Cross Knight of Spenser's *FaerieQueene*, who symbolized holiness. The red cross was also the sign of the crusader. 84. **Galaxy**, the Milky Way. 87. **baldric**, a belt which hung from one shoulder and was clasped under the other shoulder.

A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.
Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame, 160
And round the prow they read her name,
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer; 165
And they crossed themselves for fear,
All the knights at Camelot.
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, "She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace, 170
The Lady of Shalott."

(1842)

From the IDYLLS OF THE KING

Note

Tennyson was fittingly the poet laureate of the Victorian Age, and the principal narrative subject through which he expressed its ideals was the life and adventures of Arthur. The contrast between the attitude of the Middle Ages and that of Victorian England appears even in the titles which Malory and Tennyson chose for their works: *Le Morte Darthur* and the *Idylls of the King*. Under Tennyson's poetic touch the figures of the medieval romance allegorize themselves until we see distantly, vaguely, a mighty conflict between good and evil, in which every moral Victorian maxim is worked satisfactorily into the Arthurian legend. The characters have not the angular quaintness or vigor of their medieval prototypes. Sadly and mysteriously they murmur beautiful and pathetic moral reflections upon life, which are almost lyric laments. Like the Anglo-Saxon heroes, they forebode the worst, are tenacious of life, and believe in Fate—expressed of course as the Will of God; like the Celts they gaze upon the mysterious beauty of the world, wonder at the misery in it, and lament that it should be so. But unlike both, they are neither vivid nor direct. Today on reading the *Idylls of the King* we cannot help feeling that more vivid subjects for poetry lay at hand in the life of the Victorian Age than in the fields of medieval romance; yet for sheer beauty of form and expression they cannot easily be surpassed.

THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

That story which the bold Sir Bedivere,
First made and latest left of all the knights,
Told, when the man was no more than a voice
In the white winter of his age, to those
With whom he dwelt, new faces, other minds. 5

For on their march to westward, Bedivere,
Who slowly paced among the slumbering host,
Heard in his tent the moanings of the King:
"I found Him in the shining of the stars,
I marked Him in the flowering of His fields, 10
But in His ways with men I find Him not.
I waged His wars, and now I pass and die.
O me! for why is all around us here
As if some lesser god had made the world,
But had not force to shape it as he would, 15
Till the High God behold it from beyond,
And enter it, and make it beautiful?
Or else as if the world were wholly fair,
But that these eyes of men are dense and dim,
And have not power to see it as it is. 20
Perchance, because we see not to the close—
For I, being simple, thought to work His will,
And have but stricken with the sword in vain;
And all whereon I leaned in wife and friend
Is traitor to my peace, and all my realm 25
Reels back into the beast, and is no more.
My God, thou hast forgotten me in my death!
Nay—God my Christ—I pass but shall not die."

Then, ere that last weird battle in the West,
There came on Arthur sleeping, Gawain killed 30
In Lancelot's war, the ghost of Gawain blown

Along a wandering wind, and past his ear
Went shrilling, "Hollow, hollow all delight!
Hail, King! tomorrow thou shalt pass away.
Farewell! there is an isle of rest for thee. 35
And I am blown along a wandering wind,
And hollow, hollow, hollow all delight!"
And fainter onward, like wild birds that change
Their season in the night and wail their way
From cloud to cloud, down the long wind the dream 40
Shrilled; but in going mingled with dim cries
Far in the moonlit haze among the hills,
As of some lonely city sacked by night,
When all is lost, and wife and child with wail
Pass to new lords; and Arthur woke and called, 45
"Who spake? A dream. Oh, light upon the wind,
Thine, Gawain, was the voice—are these dim cries
Thine? Or doth all that haunts the waste and wild
Mourn, knowing it will go along with me?"

This heard the bold Sir Bedivere and spake: 50
"O me, my King, let pass whatever will,
Elves, and the harmless glamour of the field;
But in their stead thy name and glory cling
To all high places like a golden cloud
Forever; but as yet thou shalt not pass. 55
Light was Gawain in life, and light in death
Is Gawain, for the ghost is as the man;
And care not thou for dreams from him, but rise—
I hear the steps of Modred in the West,
And with him many of thy people, and knights 60
Once thine, whom thou hast loved, but grosser grown
Than heathen, spitting at their vows and thee.
Right well in heart they know thee for the King.
Arise, go forth and conquer as of old."

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere: 65
"Far other is this battle in the West,
Whereto we move, than when we strove in youth,
And brake the petty kings, and fought with Rome,
Or thrust the heathen from the Roman wall,
And shook him through the North. Ill doom is mine 70
To war against my people and my knights.
The king who fights his people fights himself.
And they my knights, who loved me once, the stroke
That strikes them dead is as my death to me.
Yet let us hence, and find or feel a way
Through this blind haze which, ever since I saw 76
One lying in the dust at Almesbury,
Hath folded in the passes of the world."

Then rose the King and moved his host by night,
And ever pushed Sir Modred, league by league, 80
Back to the sunset bound of Lyonesse—
A land of old upheaven from the abyss
By fire, to sink into the abyss again;
Where fragments of forgotten peoples dwelt,
And the long mountains ended in a coast
Of ever-shifting sand, and far away 86
The phantom circle of a moaning sea.
There the pursuer could pursue no more,
And he that fled, no further fly the King;

68. **fought with Rome.** The earliest traditions speak of Arthur as leader of the British tribes in several successful attacks upon the Romans. A later legend says that he drove the Romans from Britain. 69. **thrust . . . Roman wall,** drove the heathen tribes north of the Roman wall, which ran from the Firth of Clyde to the Firth of Forth. 77. **One,** Guinevere, whom he forgave and bade farewell in a nunnery at Almesbury. 81. **Lyonesse,** the ancient name for Cornwall.

And there, that day when the great light of heaven 90
Burned at his lowest in the rolling year,
On the waste sand by the waste sea they closed.
Nor ever yet had Arthur fought a fight
Like this last, dim, weird battle of the West.
A death-white mist slept over sand and sea, 95
Whereof the chill, to him who breathed it, drew
Down with his blood, till all his heart was cold
With formless fear; and even on Arthur fell
Confusion, since he saw not whom he fought.
For friend and foe were shadows in the mist, 100
And friend slew friend, not knowing whom he slew;
And some had visions out of golden youth,
And some beheld the faces of old ghosts
Look in upon the battle; and in the mist
Was many a noble deed, many a base, 105
And chance and craft and strength in single fights,
And ever and anon with host to host
Shocks, and the splintering spear, the hard mail hewn,
Shield-breakings, and the clash of brands, the crash
Of battle-axes on shattered helms, and shrieks 110
After the Christ, of those who falling down
Looked up for heaven, and only saw the mist;
And shouts of heathen and the traitor knights,
Oaths, insult, filth, and monstrous blasphemies,
Sweat, writhings, anguish, laboring of the lungs 115
In that close mist, and cryings for the light,
Moans of the dying, and voices of the dead.

109. **brands**, swords.

Last, as by some one deathbed after wail
Of suffering, silence follows, or through death
Or deathlike swoon, thus over all that shore, 120
Save for some whisper of the seething seas,
A dead hush fell; but when the dolorous day
Grew drearier toward twilight falling, came
A bitter wind, clear from the north, and blew
The mist aside, and with that wind the tide 125
Rose, and the pale King glanced across the field
Of battle; but no man was moving there,
Nor any cry of Christian heard thereon,
Nor yet of heathen; only the wan wave
Brake in among dead faces, to and fro 130
Swaying the helpless hands, and up and down
Tumbling the hollow helmets of the fallen,
And shivered brands that once had fought with Rome,
And rolling far along the gloomy shores
The voice of days of old and days to be. 135

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere,
And whiter than the mist that all day long
Had held the field of battle was the King:
"Hearest thou this great voice that shakes the world,
And wastes the narrow realm whereon we move, 140
And beats upon the faces of the dead,
My dead, as though they had not died for me?—
O Bedivere, for on my heart hath fallen
Confusion, till I know not what I am,
Nor whence I am, nor whether I be King; 145
Behold, I seem but King among the dead."

Then spake the bold Sir Bedivere: "My King!
King everywhere! and so the dead have kings,

There also will I worship thee as King.
Yet still thy life is whole, and still I live
Who love thee; but who hates thee, he that brought 151
The heathen back among us, yonder stands,
Modred unharmed, the traitor of thine house."

Then spake the King: "My house hath been my doom.
But call not thou this traitor of my house 155
Who hath but dwelt beneath one roof with me.
My house are rather they who sware my vows,
Yea, even while they brake them, owned me King.
And well for thee, saying in my dark hour,
When all the purport of my throne hath failed, 160
That quick or dead thou holdest me for King.
King am I, whatsoever be their cry;
And one last act of kinghood shalt thou see
Yet, ere I pass." And uttering this, the King
Made at the man. Then Modred smote his liege 165
Hard on that helm which many a heathen sword
Had beaten thin; while Arthur at one blow,
Striking the last stroke with Excalibur,
Slew him, and all but slain himself, he fell.

So all day long the noise of battle rolled 170
Among the mountains by the winter sea,
Until King Arthur's Table, man by man,
Had fallen in Lyonesse about their lord,
King Arthur. Then, because his wound was deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him, 175
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land.
On one side lay the ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full. 180

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"The sequel of today unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep
They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we 185
Shall nevermore, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people which I made—
Though Merlin sware that I should come again 191
To rule once more; but, let what will be, be.
I am so deeply smitten through the helm
That without help I cannot last till morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur, 195
Which was my pride; for thou rememberest how
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword—and how I rowed across 200
And took it, and have worn it, like a king;
And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In aftertime, this also shall be known.
But now delay not; take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle mere; 205
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word."

168. **Excalibur**, a magic sword which Arthur had been given as a youth. The legend in which the story is told is Celtic in origin.

181. **King Arthur.** Compare the rest of the poem closely with the account given by Malory on pages 148-149. 199. **samite**, brocaded silk. 206. **lightly**, quickly.

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:
"It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,
Aidless, alone, and smitten through the helm—
A little thing may harm a wounded man; 210
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word."

So saying, from the ruined shrine he stepped,
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men, 215
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down
By zigzag paths and juts of pointed rock,
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur, 220
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt;
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks, 224
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
Of subtlest jewelry. He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled as he stood,
This way and that dividing the swift mind,
In act to throw; but at the last it seemed
Better to leave Excalibur concealed 230
There in the many-knotted water-flags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.
So strode he back slow to the wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"Hast thou performed my mission which I gave? 235
What is it thou hast seen, or what hast heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag."

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale: 240
"Thou hast betrayed thy nature and thy name,
Not rendering true answer, as beseemed
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight;
For surer sign had followed, either hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere. 245
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again,
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me word." 249

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,
Counting the dewy pebbles, fixed in thought;
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote 254
His palms together, and he cried aloud:

"And if indeed I cast the brand away,
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
Should thus be lost forever from the earth,
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.
What good should follow this, if this were done? 260
What harm, undone? Deep harm to disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
Were it well to obey then, if a king demand
An act unprofitable, against himself?
The King is sick, and knows not what he does. 265
What record, or what relic of my lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath
And rumors of a doubt? But were this kept,

Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
Someone might show it at a just of arms, 270
Saying, 'King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills.'
So might some old man speak in the aftertime 275
To all the people, winning reverence.
But now much honor and much fame were lost."

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,
And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded King. 280

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily:
"What is it thou hast seen, or what hast heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds." 285

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath:
"Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!
Authority forgets a dying King,
Laid widowed of the power in his eye 290
That bowed the will. I see thee what thou art,
For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,
In whom should meet the offices of all,
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt;
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl 295
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence;

But if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my hands." 300

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
Among the bulrush beds, and clutched the sword,
And strongly wheeled and threw it. The great brand
Made lightnings in the splendor of the moon, 305
And flashing round and round, and whirled in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
By night, with noises of the Northern Sea. 309
So flashed and fell the brand Excalibur;
But ere he dipped the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandished him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere. 314
And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath:
"Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
Speak out; what is it thou hast heard, or seen?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems 320
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
Not though I live three lives of mortal men,
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him; 325
But when I looked again, behold an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,

272. **maiden of the Lake.** When a young king, Arthur obtained this sword from her with the help of Merlin.

That caught him by the hilt, and brandished him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere."
And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard: 330
"My end draws nigh; 'tis time that I were gone.
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,
And bear me to the margin; yet I fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die."
So saying, from the pavement he half rose, 335
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded through his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not words; 340
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands.
And rising bore him through the place of tombs.

But, as he walked, King Arthur panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed 345
When all the house is mute. So sighed the King,
Muttering and murmuring at his ear, "Quick, quick!
I fear it is too late, and I shall die."
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walked, 350
Larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought drove him like a goad.
Dry clashed his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right 355
The bare black cliff clanged round him, as he based
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of arméd heels—
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake, 359
And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them; and descending they were ware
That all the decks were dense with stately forms,
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—by these 365
Three Queens with crowns of gold; and from them rose
A cry that shivered to the tingling stars,
And, as it were one voice, an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind that shrills
All night in a waste land, where no one comes, 370
Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmured Arthur, "Place me in the barge."
So to the barge they came. There those three Queens
Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept. 374
But she that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shattered casque, and chafed his hands,
And called him by his name, complaining loud,
And dropping bitter tears against a brow
Striped with dark blood; for all his face was white 380
And colorless, and like the withered moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;
And all his greaves and cuisses dashed with drops
Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls—
That made his forehead like a rising sun

365. **stoled**, dressed in a stole, a long loose garment worn by women in the Middle Ages. Often it was lined with fur. 366. **Three Queens.** They are named by Malory on page 149, lines 56 ff. 383. **greaves**, armor to protect the legs below the knee. **cuisses**, armor to protect the thigh.

High from the dais-throne — were parched with dust; 386
Or clotted into points and hanging loose,
Mixed with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.
So like a shattered column lay the King;
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest, 390
From spur to plume a star of tournament,
Shot through the lists at Camelot, and charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere:
"Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go? 395
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?
For now I see the true old times are dead,
When every morning brought a noble chance,
And every chance brought out a noble knight.
Such times have been not since the light that led 400
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
But now the whole Round Table is dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty world,
And I, the last, go forth companionless,
And the days darken round me, and the years, 405
Among new men, strange faces, other minds."

And slowly answered Arthur from the barge:
"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfills himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world. 410
Comfort thyself; what comfort is in me?
I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within himself make pure! But thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer 415
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer 420
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
But now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou seest—if indeed I go,
For all my mind is clouded with a doubt— 426
To the island-valley of Avilion,
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadowed, happy, fair with orchard lawns 430
And bowery hollows crowned with summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood 436
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere
Revolving many memories, till the hull
Looked one black dot against the verge of dawn,
And on the mere the wailing died away.

But when that moan had passed for evermore, 441

388. **knightly growth**, i. e., beard. This is a good example of Tennyson's ornate diction. 400-401. **the light . . . Elders**, the star in the East which led the Three Wise Men to the birthplace of Christ.

427. **the island-valley of Avilion.** For other references to the Celtic Islands of the Blessed, see *Deirdre* (page 58, line 34) and *The Death of Arthur* (page 149, line 17).

The stillness of the dead world's winter dawn
Amazed him, and he groaned, "The King is gone."
And therewithal came on him the weird rime,
"From the great deep to the great deep he goes." 445

Whereat he slowly turned and slowly clomb
The last hard footstep of that iron crag;
Thence marked the black hull moving yet, and cried;
"He passes to be King among the dead,
And after healing of his grievous wound
He comes again; but—if he come no more— 451
O me, be yon dark Queens in yon black boat,
Who shrieked and wailed, the three whereat we gazed
On that high day, when, clothed with living light,

They stood before his throne in silence, friends 455
Of Arthur, who should help him at his need?"

Then from the dawn it seemed there came, but faint
As from beyond the limit of the world,
Like the last echo born of a great cry,
Sounds, as if some fair city were one voice 460
Around a king returning from his wars.

Thereat once more he moved about, and clomb
Even to the highest he could climb, and saw,
Straining his eyes beneath an arch of hand,
Or thought he saw, the speck that bare the King, 465
Down that long water opening on the deep
Somewhere far off, pass on and on, and go
From less to less and vanish into light.
And the new sun rose bringing the new year.

(1869)

452. **dark queens.** In *The Coming of Arthur*, lines 273–270, Tennyson apparently made the three queens represent Faith, Hope, and Charity. The three queens who appear here would not answer to this description, for they were originally Celtic enchantresses.

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CHAPTER III

THE BALLAD

AN INTRODUCTION

I. General Definition

The instinct for telling a story in rime and rhythm is nowhere better exhibited than in that type of literature known as the ballad. The word *ballad* means "dance-song," because originally ballad-singing often formed the accompaniment of dancing games or rhythmic swaying of the body, just as it still does in certain children's games. It does not follow, however, that all ballads had their origin in the folk-dance any more than that all lyric poems were written to be sung to the music of the lyre or harp. Many ballads must have been sung by the flickering hearth-fires,

> When the chestnuts glow in the embers,
> And the kid turns on the spit.

Others, the "riding-ballads" of heroic deeds in battle, and the cowboy ballads of the western plains of North America, were chanted on the march to the jangling of bridles and the rhythmic beat of horses' hoofs. Still others were crooned by ancient crones in the nursery or bawled lustily forth by some self-appointed entertainer at a country fair. The use to which ballads were put was undoubtedly wide. Child's collection contains three hundred and five ballads.

The word *ballad* is now applied loosely to any narrative or sentimental song. In this chapter, however, where we are considering a definite literary type, we shall restrict ourselves to the three following classes: the so-called popular ballad, by which is meant the folk-ballad; the broadside, or journalistic, ballad, which originated after the printing press had been established; and finally the literary ballad, which was written in more or less sophisticated imitation of the popular ballad. We shall examine first the content and characteristics of the popular ballad.

II. The Popular Ballad

In whatever form popular ballads appear they have this characteristic in common—they are the poetry of the folk. During that period in English history in which the nobility, as we have seen in an earlier section, were expressing their ideals of chivalry in the romances, the people, too, were expressing their interests and ideals in a poetry which was cruder and more naïve, but for that very reason more genuine. The popular ballad, therefore, is folk literature: in it are the ideas of life as the people saw it; it is of the people; it is primitive and elemental. To be sure, the narratives deal mainly with the lives of the great, with kings and queens, lords and ladies, generals and captains. But this circumstance, far from being proof that the ballad does not therefore reflect the ideals of the common people, is convincing evidence to the contrary. Popular interest, especially in a period which was not democratic, could not center in the fate of an inconspicuous individual any more than it can today, when the more popular the newspaper, the more certain it is to "feature" scandal and tragedy which touches the socially prominent. In the age of chivalry the common people undoubtedly got the same thrill from a contemplation of high life that the factory boy and girl obtain today from the presentation on the screen of a conventionalized conception of the lives of the idle-rich—all oriental rugs and tapestried walls, greyhounds on marble steps, and moneyed villains tempting virtuous chorus-girls. The high life in the ballads, like that of the "movie" today, is conventionalized. In the ballads we see the nobility, not as in the romances, but as the people saw them, with the king writing orders from his palace or "drinking the blude-reid wine," and the ladies sitting "wi' thair fans into their hand."

The ballad, therefore, is of the folk because it *does* deal, and in the manner described, with the lives of a social class above that of the singers.

In other particulars as well as in its social point of view the ballad reveals its origin. In both subject-matter and form it is distinctly of the folk. All ballad themes are of popular interest. In the ballads we find the appeal to the heroic, as in "Sir Patrick Spens," "The Hunting of the Cheviot," and other songs of high adventure on land and sea. There is love tragedy in high life, as in "Bonny Barbara Allan" and "Lord Randal"; domestic tragedy, with the murder of a father, as in "Edward," or of a sister, as in "The Twa Sisters." Folklore is the basis of many of the songs, such as "Thomas Rymer," "Kemp Owyne," "Sweet William's Ghost," "The Mermaid," and others in which fairies, ghosts, or monstrous creatures play a rôle. The popular admiration for bold outlaws—still to be reckoned with as an element in public opinion—appears in the Robin Hood cycle of ballads and in other songs of outlawry. Humorous ballads, of which the number is relatively small, differ from the others in that they deal with figures from low life, and especially with that universal victim of the satirist, the henpecked husband.

In all of these phases the ballad contains much of the emotional, in which respect again it shows its folk origin. But this characteristic is not always immediately evident. Like all other primitive poetry which tells a story for its own sake, the ballad is objective, not subjective—impersonal, not personal. That is to say, it contains no suggestion whatever of how the author of the song has been moved by the events; he does not, in fact, appear, and cuts no more figure than does the modern news-reporter in whose personal reaction to the details of a fire or a crime we have not the least concern. In other words, there is in the popular ballad no *expression* of the emotions of admiration, wonder, pity, terror, fear, etc.; the *impression* of these and other emotions is nevertheless gained, partly from the events narrated, and partly, no doubt, from the manner of their rendition by the ballad-singer. As would be expected, the popular ballad is so constructed as to create the fullest emotional impression. Let us examine briefly some of the devices by which these effects are secured.

To begin with, the popular ballad is dramatic. Like drama it was created to make an emotional impression on an audience willing to be stirred. It is stripped, therefore, of whatever might tend to impede the action of the story, and moves breathlessly and vigorously from one picturesque and stirring episode to another, with much told by implication or omitted altogether, as in "Edward" and "The Twa Corbies." As a result the popular ballad possesses a rugged and primitive strength which is not characteristic of more sophisticated poetry. The dramatic quality extends to the use of dialogue. Many ballads, indeed, are nothing but dialogue; in "Lord Randal" and "Edward," for example, we have only a series of questions and answers between a mother and a son. With this manner of narration it is easy to understand why the ballad seems so compressed in form and so rapid in movement. Emotional effects were also secured by the liberal use of suspense and climax. In the ballads just referred to, for example, the excitement of the audience must have increased visibly with each question and answer; these ballads are built like terraces with emotional interest climbing from step to step until the fatal climax has been reached, after which the ballad frequently builds another terraced approach to still another climax. The circumstance that the details of the song were usually familiar to the audience did not make the climaxes any less effective; the listeners, like children hearing the story of "Little Red Riding Hood" for the hundredth time, naïvely enjoyed the expectation of the coming thrill as well as the familiar climax itself.

Mood and form of the popular ballad were affected, therefore, by the circumstance that the song was designed to produce a definite and immediate emotional impression. Certain other characteristics may be accounted for by the conditions under which these songs were composed and transmitted. Being folk literature, created, for the most part, in a period before printing was known or even writing universally practiced, they were orally made and orally transmitted without benefit of pen or press. Because of

the fact that they thus depended for their perpetuation on the memory of illiterate men and women, they were necessarily simple in metrical form. The popular ballad was usually composed in stanzas consisting of two riming lines of seven iambic feet each, or—much more frequently—in this same structure broken up into a quatrain of alternating fours and threes, with the rime coming, of course, in the second and fourth lines. It should be apparent at once that poetry in this form of verse is very simple to compose and very easy to memorize.

Again, words and phrases in the popular ballads tended to become conventionalized, since it was easier for the composer to employ stock language than to create fresh. Thus a horse is usually "milk-white," a lady's hand "lily-white," a cock "red, red" or "gray," a crowd of people consists of "four-and-twenty." Popular ballads contain, moreover, much repetition, a good deal of which is "incremental"; that is, in a given stanza some of the lines are repeated from the preceding stanza, as in stanzas two and three of "The Wife of Usher's Well," and in the whole of "The Maid Freed from the Gallows." Finally, many of the popular ballads are characterized by the use of refrains, which are, in a way, a type of repetition which must have made the rendition of the song at once more easy and more effective. In metrical form and in the use of conventional phrases, repetitions, and refrains, therefore, the popular ballad lent itself to ready composition and transmission; and this simplicity as well as the generally attractive content of the songs, contributed beyond doubt to the circumstance that the ballad is one of the most persistent types of primitive literature, retaining a good deal of its original life and vigor long after epic and romance have been generally discarded as outgrown forms.

The origin and history of the popular ballad form a fascinating chapter which can only be sketched here. We cannot enter into the details of the sharp controversy between those scholars who hold that the popular ballads were impromptus, composed at dances and other folk gatherings, not by any one author but by many contributing a few lines each to a sort of ballad symposium, and those other scholars who believe that the popular ballads, like all other poems, were made by individual authors. Those who believe in the theory of folk authorship have on their side the fact that narrative poems, simple in structure and marked by the use of many phrase formulae, have undoubtedly been put together by groups of people, as, for example, by soldiers in the trenches or students assembled for revelry. On the other hand, those who hold the theory of individual authorship believe that the ballads which were ultimately strung together into such epics as *Beowulf*, were composed—often, no doubt, impromptu—by professional minstrels, and they can see no reason for believing that very many of the popular ballads had a different origin, except for the probable non-professional character of their composers. But whether we adopt the folk or the individual theory of authorship, the popular ballad remains folk literature, for the individual was but the mouthpiece of the many. Moreover, even if we assume an individual authorship for the majority of these songs, it is certain, as has been pointed out, that the people accepted them as their own property and soon lost sight of the authors. The words of a ballad were not printed in a set, copyrighted form, and any singer felt quite at liberty to change the phrasing and even the story if he saw fit to do so. As a result the popular ballad underwent a great deal of unconscious editing, and for the greatest favorites among these songs we have scores of different versions, some varying greatly from others as they have been subjected to the revisions of different districts and periods.

The amazing vitality of the popular ballad has been the wonder of all who have engaged in its quest. The period of its flourish falls in the two or three centuries before the Renaissance. But ballads were widely sung long after the advent of the printing-press in England in 1477; Sir Philip Sidney was stirred by the barbaric swing of the ballad of Douglas and Percy ("The Hunting of the Cheviot"); Sir Walter Scott gathered riding ballads in the Pentlands at the end of the eighteenth century; and even today the same old songs, modified by time and place, are garnered by ballad-lovers from the lips of Kentucky, Tennessee, and North Carolina mountaineers, who know nothing of the

history of their migration from England and Scotland. Moreover, to this old stock of ballads new songs are being added. From the mountains and plains and forests of America, where cattle-camp and lumber-shack create conditions favorable to their composition, come many ballads, sophisticated, to be sure, in some respects but still retaining many characteristics of the ancient type. Such a song is the semi-burlesque "The Shanty Boy" ballad, printed in the selections following.

The popular ballad, therefore, the song of the folk, has enjoyed a longer life and seems possessed of more rugged vitality than the other two old narrative types, the epic and the romance. It is possible that the spread of civilization may ultimately choke completely the impulse to chronicle adventure and tragedy in simple narrative poems, but that time has not yet come.

What has been written so far relates to the popular ballad, the ballad of the folk, objective, impersonal, but emotional in content and impression and sturdy in vitality. We must still treat briefly two types of narrative poetry akin to the popular ballad —the broadside, or journalistic, ballad and the literary ballad, or ballad of art, as it is sometimes called, written in imitation of the popular ballad.

III. The Broadside Ballad

The broadside ballad, so-called because it was printed on one side of a printer's sheet and hawked through the streets and at fairs by professional ballad-mongers, belongs really to the history of journalism, inasmuch as this type of ballad took the place of the newspaper at a time when the newspaper was unknown. Nevertheless, as has been pointed out by Professor H. E. Rollins in the Introduction to *A Pepysian Garland* of broadside ballads, the discrimination between the popular or traditional ballad and the broadside or stall ballad is quite recent; to an Elizabethan the word *ballad* probably suggested only the printed song bawled in the streets and sold for a penny or two like a modern journal. Although popular ballads were occasionally printed and sold as broadsides, such publication of them was relatively infrequent, and the broadside ballad may be regarded, therefore, as a distinct, though closely related, *genre*. A comparison of the two types will show that they possess in common the use of sensational material, actual or fictitious. It is quite probable that if Sir Patrick Spens had been lost with his ship and all hands during the reign of Elizabeth instead of during that of Edward I, his fate would have been chronicled in a broadside ballad instead of in a popular ballad. Murder, which is the theme of so many popular ballads, appears also as the subject of numerous broadsides. The broadsides, on the other hand, have certain characteristics which differentiate them from the earlier type. Most of them are doggerel accounts of actual events, with details usually exaggerated beyond all belief; or they make at least a sober claim to the truth. Most popular ballads, on the other hand, do not recount actual events, and except for an occasional line in the historical ballads, no attempt is made to assert the veracity of the details. The broadside ballads, moreover, were written by hack poets whose names were often known; the popular ballads, on the other hand, as has been said, were not only anonymous, but were usually modified at the hands of successive generations of singers. Finally, most of the broadside ballads are didactic and moral in tone, as the true popular ballad never is. In "A Warning for All Desperate Women," for example, the very title, as well as the preachment in the concluding stanzas, shows the obvious cloak of morality which covers the details of the crime itself, and is not unlike the cant of some modern journals.

Not all of the broadside ballads dealt with contemporary material. Sold with purely journalistic stuff were ragged metrical versions of "Leander's Love to Loyal Hero," "The History of The Prophet Jonas," and other material from classical or Biblical lore. But most broadsides deal with murders and the "good-nights" of murderers, or give doggerel accounts of foreign wars and domestic troubles, of monstrous births and horrid prodigies, such as the "hog-faced gentlewoman" and the "strange and miraculous fish" cast ashore in Chester. The Elizabethan world was just as busy creating material for the broadside ballad writer as the

modern world is in performing the same service for the reporter of a "yellow" journal; indeed, in their interest in what passes for news, the two periods are not far apart.

The broadside ballad flourished during the hundred fifty years following the establishment of the printing-press, but the appearance in American life of metrical versions of such events as the Milwaukee hotel fire, the Johnstown flood, and the brave run of Casey Jones, the engineer, shows that the instinct for reporting the sensational in verse has not been entirely destroyed by the circumstance that most persons now get their thrills from the prose columns of the screaming "daily."

IV. The Ballad of Art

So extensive has been the influence of the popular ballad upon literature after the middle of the eighteenth century that it will be possible here only to sketch the effects very briefly. Two characteristics of the Romantic Movement in literature led writers of that period directly to the ballad. One was the returning interest in the medieval; the other was the reaction against the complex and artificial in life and literature, and in favor of the simple and naïve. The publication in 1765, therefore, of the Percy folio manuscript, which contained a great many of the popular ballads and formed the basis for subsequent collections, was the beginning of a rapidly widening interest in this form of literature, not only in England and Scotland but also on the Continent. Chatterton imitated the ballads; Scott collected and copied them; Wordsworth adopted their meter and manner and defended his choice; Southey wrote long, artificial ballads, unballad-like in their moral tenor and flavored with the then popular terror and mystery material of the "Gothic" novels. From this period on, interest in the ballad, though not so intense as during the years of the Romantic Movement, has, nevertheless, continued. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries poets in England and America have continued to imitate the ballad, and scholars to study the literary type and collect specimens of it. Fresh imitations and previously undiscovered "versions" appear constantly.

Literary ballads, like all imitations, usually lack the spirit of the original; they possess, on the other hand, the finish of individual art. Occasionally, as in some of Wordsworth's lyrical ballads, the simplicity of the old songs is almost achieved. But most poets—especially in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, where the lyric and the subjective tend to interpenetrate the purely narrative and objective—refine and sublimate their imitations quite beyond the originals. As a result the new poems are to the old popular songs what Hyperion is to a satyr; beauty and grace they have in abundance, but the rugged strength and other elemental qualities native to the popular ballads they do not often possess. These new poems we read with pleasure, and in many we recognize literary art far beyond that of the homespun originals, but we would not willingly have them take the place of the songs which stirred the heart of Sir Philip Sidney as with a trumpet.

CHAPTER III

SELECTIONS

DOMESTIC AND LOVE TRAGEDIES

EDWARD

NOTE

This ballad is famous for the dramatic intensity of its dialogue, the compactness of its narrative, and the accelerating swiftness of its movement. The effectiveness of the refrain, of the question and answer method, and of the parallel structure should all be studied. The last will and testament in the concluding stanzas is a frequent ballad device.

"Why dois your brand sae drap wi bluid,
Edward, Edward?
Why dois your brand sae drap wi bluid,
And why sae sad gang yee O?"
"O I hae killed my hauke sae guid, 5
Mither, mither,
O I hae killed my hauke sae guid,
And I had nae mair bot hee O."

"Your haukis bluid was nevir sae reid,
Edward, Edward, 10
Your haukis bluid was never sae reid,
My deir son I tell thee O."
"O I hae killed my reid-roan steid,
Mither, mither,
O I hae killed my reid-roan steid, 15
That erst was sae fair and frie O."

"Your steid was auld, and ye hae gat mair,
Edward, Edward,
Your steid was auld, and ye hae gat mair;
Sam other dule ye drie O." 20
"O I hae killed my fadir deir,
Mither, mither,
O I hae killed my fadir deir,
Alas, and wae is mee O!"

"And whatten penance wul ye drie for that, 25
Edward, Edward?
And whatten penance wul ye drie, for that?
My deir son, now tell me O."
"Ile set my feit in yonder boat,
Mither, mither, 30
Ile set my feit in yonder boat,
And Ile fare ovir the sea O."

"And what wul ye doe wi your towirs and your ha,
Edward, Edward?
And what wul ye doe wi your towirs and your ha, 35
That were sae fair to see O?"
"Ile let thame stand tul they doun fa,
Mither, mither,
Ile let thame stand tul they doun fa,
For here nevir mair maun I bee O." 40

"And what wul ye leive to your bairns and your wife,
Edward, Edward?
And what wul ye leive to your bairns and your wife,
Whan ye gang ovir the sea O?"
"The warldis room, late them beg thrae life, 45
Mither, mither,
The warldis room, late them beg thrae life,
For thame nevir mair wul I see O."

"And what wul ye leive to your ain mither deir,
Edward, Edward? 50
And what wul ye leive to your ain mither deir?
My deir son, now tell me O."

1. **brand**, sword. **bluid**, blood. 4. **gang**, go. 5 **hauke**, hawk. **guid**, good. 8. **mair**, more. **bot**, but. 9. **reid**, red. 13. **steid**, steed. 16. **erst**, once. **frie**, spirited. 20. **dule**, grief. **drie**, suffer. 21. **fadir**, father.

25. **drie**, undergo. 29. **feit**, feet. 33. **ha**, manor-house. 37. **tul**, until. **doun fa**, fall down. 40. **maun**, must. 41. **bairns**, children. 45. **warldis**, world's. **late**, let. 49. **ain**, own.

"The curse of hell frae me sall ye beir,
Mither, mither,
The curse of hell frae me sall ye beir, 55
Sic counseils ye gave to me O."

LORD RANDAL

Note

Like "Edward," this ballad of the young nobleman poisoned by his true-love is constructed on the dramatic question and answer plan, with an increasing tenseness in the unfolding of the story until the climax is reached. Note in the last line the repetition, which becomes almost a refrain. The ballad appears in many versions and is still popular in England and America.

"O where hae ye been, Lord Randal, my son?
O where hae ye been, my handsome young man?"
"I hae been to the wild wood; mother, make my bed soon,
For I'm weary wi hunting, and fain wald lie down."

"Where gat ye your dinner, Lord Randal, my son? 5
Where gat ye your dinner, my handsome young man?"
"I dined wi my true-love; mother, make my bed soon,
For I'm weary wi hunting, and fain wald lie down."

"What gat ye to your dinner, Lord Randal, my son?
What gat ye to your dinner, my handsome young man?" 10
"I gat eels boiled in broo; mother, make my bed soon,
For I'm weary wi hunting, and fain wald lie down."

"What became of your bloodhounds, Lord Randal, my son?
What became of your bloodhounds, my handsome young man?"

"O they swelld and they died; mother, make my bed soon, 15
For I'm weary wi hunting, and fain wald lie down."

"O I fear ye are poisond, Lord Randal, my son!
O I fear ye are poisond, my handsome young man!"
"O yes! I am poisond; mother, make my bed soon,
For I'm sick at the heart, and I fain wald lie down." 20

53. **sall**, shall. 56. **Sic**, such.
Lord Randal. 4. **wald**, would. 9. **What gat**, etc., what did you have for dinner? 11. **eels.** It was a popular superstition that snakes were frequently made into a poisonous stew and fed to the victims as eels or fish. Cf. the headnote and lines 6-7 of the following ballad. **broo**, broth.

THE BONNIE WEE CROODLIN DOW*

Note

This ballad is one of the numerous versions of "Lord Randal," included here to show how ballads on the same general theme may differ. Here the fine ballad of the noble lord poisoned by his false loved one has become a nursery song of a wee boy poisoned by his step-mother. It will be observed, however, that in its structure this ballad does not differ essentially from "Lord Randal." The wicked step-mother is a familiar figure in folk-tales; in this ballad she is naïvely represented as existing side by side with the boy's own "mammie." In a German version of this nursery ballad a grandmother poisons the child with boiled snakes offered as eels.

"O whare hae ye been a' day, my bonnie wee croodlin dow?
O whare hae ye been a' day, my bonnie wee croodlin dow?"
"I've been at my step-mother's; oh, mak my bed, mammie, now!
I've been at my step-mother's; oh, mak my bed, mammie, now!"

"O what did ye get at your step-mother's, my bonnie wee croodlin dow?" (*Twice.*) 5
"I gat a wee wee fishie; oh, mak my bed, mammie, now!" (*Twice.*)

"O whare gat she the wee fishie, my bonnie wee croodlin dow?"
"In a dub before the door; oh, mak my bed, mammie, now!"

*"The Pretty Little Cooing Dove," a playful term of endearment. 5. **Twice.** Each line is to be repeated without variation except as indicated in the last stanza. 8. **dub**, pool.

"What did ye wi the wee fishie, my
bonnie wee croodlin dow?"
"I boild it in a wee pannie; oh, mak my
bed, mammie, now!" 10
"Wha gied ye the banes o the fishie till,
my bonnie wee croodlin dow?"
"I gied them till a wee doggie; oh, mak
my bed, mammie, now!"

"O whare is the little wee doggie, my
bonnie wee croodlin dow?
O whare is the little wee doggie, my
bonnie wee croodlin dow?"
"It shot out its fit and died, and sae
maun I do, too; 15
Oh, mak my bed, mammie, now, now,
oh, mak my bed, mammie, now!"

BONNIE GEORGE CAMPBELL

Note

This is the tragedy of the empty saddle, an episode of some skirmish. It is a ballad of dramatic situation, rather than of action. "Bonnie George Campbell" is entirely objective and should be contrasted with Tennyson's "Home They Brought Her Warrior Dead," in which a modern poet has handled the same general theme more subjectively, and with an analysis of the psychology of grief which is missing entirely in the ballad.

Hie upon Hielands,
And low upon Tay,
Bonnie George Campbell
Rade out on a day.

Saddled and bridled 5
And gallant rade he;
Hame cam his gude horse,
But never cam he!

Out cam his auld mither
Greeting fu' sair, 10
And out cam his bonnie bride
Rivin' her hair.

Saddled and bridled
And booted rade he;
Toom hame cam the saddle, 15
But never cam he!

11. **till**, to. 15. **shot out its fit**, stuck out its feet.
Bonnie George Campbell. 1. **Hie**, high. 2. **Tay**, a river in central Scotland which flows eastward into the North Sea. 4. **Rade**, rode. 7. **Hame**, home. 10. **Greeting**, weeping. 12. **Rivin'**, tearing. 15. **Toom**, empty.

"My meadow lies green,
And my corn is unshorn;
My barn is to big,
And my babie's unborn." 20

Saddled and bridled
And booted rade he;
Toom hame cam the saddle,
But never cam he.

THE TWA CORBIES

Note

It would be hard to match this grim ballad for compression; between the lines is suggested a whole drama of faithlessness and crime. The song is still popular, especially in the degenerate version which begins, "Three old crows sat on a tree," etc.

As I was walking all alane,
I heard twa corbies making a mane;
The tane unto the t'other say,
"Where sall we gang and dine today?"

"In behint yon auld fail dyke, 5
I wot there lies a new slain knight;
And naebody kens that he lies there
But his hawk, his hound, and lady fair.

"His hound is to the hunting gane,
His hawk to fetch the wild-fowl hame, 10
His lady's ta'en another mate,
So we may mak our dinner sweet.

"Ye'll sit on his white hause-bane,
And I'll pike out his bonny blue een;
Wi ae lock o his gowden hair, 15
We'll theek our nest when it grows
bare.

"Mony a one for him makes mane,
But nane sall ken where he is gane;
Oer his white banes, when they are
bare,
The wind sall blaw for evermair." 20

18. **corn**, standing oats. The soldier's widow is speaking. **unshorn**, uncut. 19. **to big**, unbuilt.
The Twa Corbies. The title means "the two ravens." 1. **alane**, alone. 2. **mane**, here not "moan," but simply expression or utterance. 3. **tane**, one. 5. **fail dyke**, wall of turf. 6. **wot**, know. 7. **kens**, knows. 13. **hause-bane**, neck-bone. 14. **pike**, pick. **een**, eyes. 15. **gowden**, golden. 16. **theek**, thatch. 17. **mane**, lament. 18. **gane**, gone.

THE TWA SISTERS

Note

The humiliation and jealousy of an older sister who sees a younger sister married first is a frequent theme of the ballad of domestic tragedy. The "murder-will-out" motif contained in lines 50-61 appears repeatedly as the climax of such narratives in folk-tale and song. The refrain—omitted after the first stanza in this reprint—is a characteristic reference to localities familiar to the singers.

There was twa sisters in a bowr,
Edinburgh, Edinburgh,
There was twa sisters in a bowr,
Stirling for ay;
There was twa sisters in a bowr, 5
There came a knight to be their wooer;
Bonny Saint Johnston stands upon Tay.

He courted the eldest wi glove an ring,
But he lovd the youngest above a' thing.

He courted the eldest wi brotch an knife, 10
But he lovd the youngest as his life.

The eldest she was vexéd sair,
An much envied her sister fair.

Into her bowr she could not rest;
Wi grief an spite she almos brast. 15

Upon a morning fair an clear,
She cried upon her sister dear:

"O sister, come to yon sea stran,
An see our father's ships come to lan."

She's taen her by the milk-white han, 20
An led her down to yon sea stran.

The youngest stood upon a stane;
The eldest came an threw her in.

She tooke her by the middle sma,
And dashed her bonny back to the jaw. 25

10. **brotch**, brooch. **knife**, i.e., a small ornamented knife for sharpening quill-pens. 15. **brast**, burst. 17. **upon**, unto. 24. **sma**, small. 25. **jaw**, wave, i. e., she pitched her into the water.

"O sister, sister, tak my han,
An Ise mack you heir to a' my lan.

"O sister, sister, tak my middle,
An yes get my goud and my gouden girdle.

"O sister, sister, save my life, 30
An I swear Ise never be nae man's wife."

"Foul fa the han that I should tacke;
It twind me an my wardles make.

"Your cherry cheeks an yallow hair
Gars me gae maiden for evermair." 35

Sometimes she sank, an sometimes she swam,
Till she came down yon bonny mill-dam.

O out it came the miller's son,
An saw the fair maid swimmin in.

"O father, father, draw your dam; 40
Here's either a mermaid or a swan."

The miller quickly drew the dam,
An there he found a drownd woman.

You coudna see her yallow hair
For gold and pearle that were so rare. 45

You coudna see her middle sma
For gouden girdle that was sae braw.

You coudna see her fingers white,
For gouden rings that were sae gryte.

An by there came a harper fine, 50
That harpéd to the king at dine.

When he did look that lady upon,
He sighd and made a heavy moan.

He's taen three locks o her yallow hair,
And wi them strung his harp sae fair. 55

The first tune he did play and sing,
Was, "Farewell to my father the king."

27. **mack**, make. 29. **goud**, gold. 32. **Foul fa**, cursed be. 33. **twind**, separated. **wardles make**, world's mate. 35. **Gars**, makes. 40. **draw**, draw off the water from. 47. **sae braw**, so fine. 49. **gryte**, great. 51. **dine**, dinner. 54. **taen**, taken.

The nextin tune that he playd syne,
Was, "Farewell to my mother the queen."

The lasten tune that he playd then, 60
Was, "Wae to my sister, fair Ellen."

BONNY BARBARA ALLAN

NOTE

Dying for love is a favorite theme of the romantic ballads, and the story of Barbara Allan, in a great many versions, is still sung in England and America. It is a ballad convention to make the lover come, like young Lochinvar, out of the West.

It was in and about the Martinmas time,
When the green leaves were a falling,
That Sir John Graeme, in the West Country,
Fell in love with Barbara Allan.

He sent his men down through the town 5
To the place where she was dwelling:
"O haste and come to my master dear,
Gin ye be Barbara Allan."

O hooly, hooly rose she up,
To the place where he was lying, 10
And when she drew the curtain by,
"Young man, I think you're dying."

"O it's I'm sick, and very, very sick,
And it's a' for Barbara Allan";
"O the better for me ye's never be, 15
Tho your heart's blood were a spilling.

"O dinna ye mind, young man," said she,
"When ye was in the tavern a drinking,
That ye made the healths gae round and round,
And slighted Barbara Allan?" 20

He turned his face unto the wall,
And death was with him dealing;
"Adieu, adieu, my dear friends all,
And be kind to Barbara Allan."

And slowly, slowly raise she up, 25
And slowly, slowly left him,
And sighing said she coud not stay,
Since death of life had reft him.

She had not gane a mile but twa,
When she heard the dead-bell ringing, 30
And every jow that the dead-bell geid,
It cry'd, Woe to Barbara Allan!

"O mother, mother, make my bed!
O make it saft and narrow!
Since my love died for me today, 35
I'll die for him tomorrow."

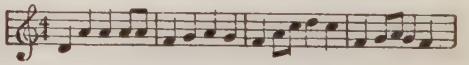
58. **nextin**, next. **syne**, then. 61. **Wae**, etc. The concluding curse is characteristic; cf. "Edward," page 209, lines 53-55.

Bonny Barbara Allan. 1. **Martinmas**, the feast of St. Martin, November 11. 3. **West Country**, probably Westmorland. Cf. "Johnie Armstrong" (page 224, line 1). 8. **Gin**, if. 9. **hooly**, slowly (cf. line 25). 11. **curtain**, the curtain of the four-poster bed in which he lay. 14. **a'**, all. 17. **dinna**, do not. **mind**, remember.

THE BUTCHER'S BOY

NOTE

A typical suicide-for-love ballad of the cheaply sentimental variety. This ballad is widespread and appears in several American versions. The following version was furnished by Mary E. Barnicle; it was sung by her mother to the following tune:



For another tune see Cox's *Folk-Songs of the South*, page 530.

In Jersey City where I did dwell,
A butcher boy I loved so well;
He courted me my heart away,
But along with me he would not stay.

There is an inn in this same town 5
Where my love goes and sits him down;
He takes a strange girl on his knee,
And he tells to her what he once told me.

25. **raise**, rose. 29. **a mile but twa**, more than two miles. 30. **dead-bell**, the death-bell tolling for her lover. 31. **jow**, stroke.

The Butcher's Boy. 1. **Jersey City.** Some versions say, "In London Town" or "In New York City."

It's a grief to me and I will tell you why,
Because she has more gold than I. 10
But her gold will melt and her silver fly,
And in time of peace she's as poor as I.

I go upstairs to make my bed,
And nothing to my mother said.
My mother comes upstairs to me, 15
Says, "What's the matter, daughter dear?"

"Oh! mother dear, you do not know
What grief and pain, and sorrow, woe;
Go get me a chair to sit me down,
And a pen and ink to write it down." 20

And when her father he came home,
Says, "Where has my daughter gone?"
When running upstairs the door he broke,
And found her hanging up by a rope.

He took his knife and cut her down, 25
And in her bosom those words were found,
"What a foolish maid am I,
To hang myself for a butcher boy.

"Go dig my grave both long and deep,
Place a marble stone at my head and feet, 30
And on my bosom place a turtle dove;
Let the wide world see that I died in love.

"I wished, I wished but my wish [was] in vain,
I wished I was a maid again;
But a maid again I ne'er shall be, 35
Until apples grow on a cherry tree."

12. **And in time,** etc. This line seems meaningless. The version in Professor Pound's *American Ballads and Songs* (page 61) reads: "She'll see the day she's poor as I." 33. **I wished,** etc. The requiem and epitaph is a characteristic ballad formula, frequently burlesqued as in the familiar "drunkard's requiem" of college songs.

THE MAID FREED FROM THE GALLOWS

Note

This ballad is included because it illustrates so perfectly the device known as incremental repetition. It will be observed that the condemned girl's plea to the judge, her succession of petitions to her relatives, and their replies are couched in identical phrases. As a result the entire fifteen stanzas may easily be memorized from a single reading. This type of repetition is of frequent occurrence in popular ballads and especially in children's nursery and game songs, as, for example, "The Drummer Boy." The situation of a condemned girl's looking eagerly for a succession of possible rescuers appears frequently in folk-tales; an example is the widely popular story of Bluebeard. D. G. Rossetti has imitated the structure of this ballad in his "Sister Helen"; in Rossetti's ballad, however, the various persons who ride up come to beg the life of a faithless lover whom Sister Helen is killing by witchcraft.

"O good Lord Judge, and sweet Lord Judge,
Peace for a little while!
Methinks I see my own father,
Come riding by the stile.

"O father, O father, a little of your gold, 5
And likewise of your fee!
To keep my body from yonder grave,
And my neck from the gallows-tree."

"None of my gold now you shall have,
Nor likewise of my fee; 10
For I am come to see you hangd,
And hangéd you shall be."

"O good Lord Judge, and sweet Lord Judge,
Peace for a little while!
Methinks I see my own mother, 15
Come riding by the stile.

"O mother, O mother, a little of your gold,
And likewise of your fee,
To keep my body from yonder grave,
And my neck from the gallows-tree!" 20

"None of my gold now shall you have,
Nor likewise of my fee;

6. **fee,** property or goods. The girl is asking, of course, for a ransom. 8. **gallows-tree,** an early term for gibbet; there were many grim jests on the subject of the "fruit" of the tree.

For I am come to see you hangd,
And hangéd you shall be."

"O good Lord Judge, and sweet Lord Judge, 25
Peace for a little while!
Methinks I see my own brother,
Come riding by the stile.

"O brother, O brother, a little of your gold,
And likewise of your fee, 30
To keep my body from yonder grave,
And my neck from the gallows-tree!"

"None of my gold now shall you have,
Nor likewise of my fee;
For I am come to see you hangd, 35
And hangéd you shall be."

"O good Lord Judge, and sweet Lord Judge,
Peace for a little while!
Methinks I see my own sister,
Come riding by the stile. 40

"O sister, O sister, a little of your gold,
And likewise of your fee,
To keep my body from yonder grave,
And my neck from the gallows-tree!"

"None of my gold now shall you have, 45
Nor likewise of my fee;
For I am come to see you hangd,
And hangéd you shall be."

"O good Lord Judge, and sweet Lord Judge,
Peace for a little while! 50
Methinks I see my own true-love,
Come riding by the stile.

"O true-love, O true-love, a little of your gold,
And likewise of your fee,
To save my body from yonder grave, 55
And my neck from the gallows-tree."

"Some of my gold now you shall have,
And likewise of my fee,
For I am come to see you saved,
And savéd you shall be." 60

51. **true-love.** In some versions her husband appears; in others she directs a succession of curses against her heartless relatives.

FOLKLORE AND SUPERSTITION

THOMAS RYMER

NOTE

The theme of a mortal obliged to serve the fairies for a definite period, usually seven years, is familiar in folklore. Thomas of Erceldoune, or Thomas the Rhymer, was a Scotch seer and poet of the thirteenth century who was believed by the superstitious to have received his prophetic power from the queen of the fairies.

True Thomas lay oer yond grassy bank,
And he beheld a ladie gay,
A ladie that was brisk and bold,
Come riding oer the fernie brae.

Her skirt was of the grass-green silk, 5
Her mantle of the velvet fine,
At ilka tett of her horse's mane
Hung fifty silver bells and nine.

True Thomas he took off his hat, 9
And bowed him low down till his knee:
"All hail, thou mighty Queen of Heaven!
For your peer on earth I never did see."

"O no, O no, True Thomas," she says,
"That name does not belong to me;
I am but the queen of fair Elfland, 15
And I'm come here for to visit thee.

. . . . . .

"But ye maun go wi me now, Thomas,
True Thomas, ye maun go wi me,
For ye maun serve me seven years,
Thro weel or wae as may chance to be." 20

4. **fernie brae,** ferny hill. 7. **ilka tett,** every lock. 11. **Queen of Heaven,** i. e., the Virgin Mary. 17. **maun,** must. 20. **wae,** woe.

She turned about her milk-white steed,
And took True Thomas up behind;
And aye wheneer her bridle rang,
The steed flew swifter than the wind.

For forty days and forty nights 25
He wade thro red blude to the knee,
And he saw neither sun nor moon,
But heard the roaring of the sea.

O they rade on, and further on,
Until they came to a garden green: 30
"Light down, light down, ye ladie free;
Some of that fruit let me pull to thee."

"O no, O no, True Thomas," she says,
"That fruit maun not be touched by thee,
For a' the plagues that are in hell 35
Light on the fruit of this countrie.

"But I have a loaf here in my lap,
Likewise a bottle of claret wine,
And now ere we go farther on, 39
We'll rest a while, and ye may dine."

When he had eaten and drunk his fill,
"Lay down your head upon my knee,"
The lady sayd, "ere we climb yon hill,
And I will show you fairlies three.

"O see not ye yon narrow road, 45
So thick beset wi thorns and briers?
That is the path of righteousness,
Tho after it but few enquires.

"And see not ye that braid, braid road,
That lies across yon lillie leven? 50
That is the path of wickedness,
Tho some call it the road to heaven.

"And see not ye that bonny road
Which winds about the fernie brae?
That is the road to fair Elfland, 55
Where you and I this night maun gae.

"But Thomas, ye maun hold your tongue,
Whatever you may hear or see,
For gin ae word you should chance to speak,
You will neer get back to your ain countrie." 60

He has gotten a coat of the even cloth,
And a pair of shoes of velvet green,
And till seven years were past and gone
True Thomas on earth was never seen.

44. **fairlies**, wonders. 50. **lillie leven**, lovely glade.

KEMP OWYNE

Note

Ballad themes were borrowed occasionally from the romances. The story of Kemp Owyne is similar to *The Marriage of Sir Gawaine*, with which it should be compared. It should be compared also with *The Wife of Bath's Tale* in Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*. In this ballad we have the familiar folklore material of the stepmother's curse and the disenchantment by kisses, as in the story of "The Sleeping Beauty." The ballad is built in the usual narrative steps.

Her mother died when she was young,
Which gave her cause to make great moan;
Her father married the warst woman
That ever lived in Christendom.

She servéd her with foot and hand, 5
In every thing that she could dee,
Till once, in an unlucky time,
She threw her in ower Craigy's sea.

Says, "Lie you there, dove Isabel,
And all my sorrows lie with thee; 10
Till Kemp Owyne come ower the sea,
And borrow you with kisses three,
Let all the warld do what they will,
Oh, borrowed shall you never be!"

Her breath grew strang, her hair grew lang, 15
And twisted thrice about the tree,
And all the people, far and near,
Thought that a savage beast was she.

59. **gin**, if. 61. **even**, smooth.
Kemp Owyne. The word *kemp* means "champion"; cf. German *kämpfen*, to fight. 5. **She**, here the daughter; in line 8 the stepmother. 8. **Craigy's sea**, "Craig of sea" in some versions. 12. **borrow**, ransom.

These news did come to Kemp Owyne,
  Where he lived, far beyond the sea;
He hasted him to Craigy's sea, 21
  And on the savage beast looked he.

Her breath was strang, her hair was lang,
  And twisted was about the tree,
And with a swing she came about: 25
  "Come to Craigy's sea, and kiss with me.

"Here is a royal belt," she cried,
  "That I have found in the green sea;
And while your body it is on,
  Drawn shall your blood never be; 30
But if you touch me, tail or fin,
  I vow my belt your death shall be."

He steppéd in, gave her a kiss;
  The royal belt he brought him wi.
Her breath was strang, her hair was lang, 35
  And twisted twice about the tree,
And with a swing she came about:
  "Come to Craigy's sea, and kiss with me.

"Here is a royal ring," she said,
  "That I have found in the green sea; 40
And while your finger it is on,
  Drawn shall your blood never be;
But if you touch me, tail or fin,
  I swear my ring your death shall be."

He steppéd in, gave her a kiss; 45
  The royal ring he brought him wi.
Her breath was strang, her hair was lang,
  And twisted ance about the tree,
And with a swing she came about:
  "Come to Craigy's sea, and kiss with me. 50

"Here is a royal brand," she said,
  "That I have found in the green sea;
And while your body it is on,
  Drawn shall your blood never be;
But if you touch me, tail or fin, 55
  I swear my brand your death shall be."

He steppéd in, gave her a kiss;
  The royal brand he brought him wi.
Her breath was sweet, her hair grew short,
  And twisted nane about the tree; 60
And smilingly she came about,
  As fair a woman as fair could be.

34. **brought him wi,** took for his own. 51. **brand,** sword. Other magic swords from the sea were those of Grendel, in *Beowulf*, and of King Arthur.

SWEET WILLIAM'S GHOST

Note

This is one example of the widespread return-from-the-dead theme. Ordinarily the ballad of this type tells of a lover whose ghost returns to his mistress either because of her unfaithfulness or because of her excessive grief. The theme was a great favorite with late eighteenth and early nineteenth century imitators of the ballad; examples of such imitations are Bürger's fine "Leonore," and the melodramatic and lurid "Alonzo the Brave and the Fair Imogene," by "Monk" Lewis.

There came a ghost to Margret's door,
  With many a grievous groan,
And ay he tirléd at the pin,
  But answer made she none.

"Is that my father Philip, 5
  Or is't my brother John?
Or is't my true-love Willy,
  From Scotland new come home?"

"'Tis not thy father Philip,
  Nor yet thy brother John; 10
But 'tis thy true-love Willy,
  From Scotland new come home.

"O sweet Margret, O dear Margret,
  I pray thee speak to me;
Give me my faith and troth, Margret, 15
  As I gave it to thee."

"Thy faith and troth thou's never get,
  Nor yet will I thee lend,
Till that thou come within my bower,
  And kiss my cheek and chin." 20

"If I should come within thy bower,
  I am no earthly man;

Sweet William's Ghost. 3. **tirléd at the pin.** By pulling the string or latch which hung outside he rattled the wooden pin that was inside but disconnected at night from the bar which it ordinarily lifted. 18. **lend,** give. 22. **no earthly man,** i. e., he is unearthly—a ghost.

And should I kiss thy rosy lips,
  Thy days will not be lang.

"O sweet Margret, O dear Margret, 25
  I pray thee speak to me;
Give me my faith and troth, Margret,
  As I gave it to thee."

"Thy faith and troth thou's never get,
  Nor yet will I thee lend, 30
Till you take me to yon kirk,
  And wed me with a ring."

"My bones are buried in yon kirk-yard,
  Afar beyond the sea,
And it is but my spirit, Margret, 35
  That's now speaking to thee."

She stretchd out her lilly-white hand,
  And, for to do her best,
"Hae, there's your faith and troth, Willy;
  God send your soul good rest." 40

Now she has kilted her robes of green
  A piece below her knee,
And a' the live-lang winter night
  The dead corp followed she.

"Is there any room at your head, Willy? 45
  Or any room at your feet?
Or any room at your side, Willy,
  Wherein that I may creep?"

"There's no room at my head, Margret,
  There's no room at my feet; 50
There's no room at my side, Margret,
  My coffin's made so meet."

Then up and crew the red, red cock,
  And up then crew the gray:
"'Tis time, 'tis time, my dear Margret, 55
  That you were going away."

No more the ghost to Margret said,
  But, with a grievous groan,
Evanishd in a cloud of mist,
  And left her all alone. 60

39. **Hae**, take it. 41. **kilted**, tucked up. 44. **corp**, corpse. 52. **meet**, close. 53. **crew the cock**, the usual ballad signal of approaching dawn.

"O stay, my only true-love, stay,"
  The constant Margret cry'd;
Wan grew her cheeks, she closd her een,
  Stretchd her soft limbs, and dy'd.

THE WIFE OF USHER'S WELL

Note

One group of ballads dealing with the return from the dead tells of three sons (small children in some versions) who come back to their mother for a visit until cock-crow summons them to their graves. In the following version the sons are sailors who return after their mother has cursed the sea which has swallowed them. The story is unfolded with dramatic swiftness and pathetic compression.

There lived a wife at Usher's Well,
  And a wealthy wife was she;
She had three stout and stalwart sons,
  And sent them oer the sea.

They hadna been a week from her, 5
  A week but barely ane,
Whan word came to the carline wife
  That her three sons were gane.

They hadna been a week from her,
  A week but barely three, 10
Whan word came to the carline wife
  That her sons she'd never see.

"I wish the wind may never cease,
  Nor fashes in the flood,
Till my three sons come hame to me, 15
  In earthly flesh and blood."

It fell about the Martinmass,
  When nights are lang and mirk,
The carline wife's three sons came hame,
  And their hats were o the birk. 20

It neither grew in syke nor ditch,
  Nor yet in ony sheugh;
But at the gates o Paradise,
  That birk grew fair eneugh.

. . . . . .

1. **wife**, woman. 7. **carline wife**, old woman. 14. **Nor fashes in the flood**, "may the sea never cease to be troubled." 17. **Martinmass**, November 11. 18. **mirk**, dark. 20. **o the birk**, i.e., they were wearing wreaths of birch. The next stanza explains that the tree grew in Paradise, an indirect way of saying that they were ghosts. 21. **syke**, trench. 22. **sheugh**, furrow. 24. **eneugh**, enough.

"Blow up the fire, my maidens, 25
Bring water from the well;
For a' my house shall feast this night,
Since my three sons are well."

And she has made to them a bed,
She's made it large and wide, 30
And she's taen her mantle her about,
Sat down at the bed-side.

. . . . . .

Up then crew the red, red cock,
And up and crew the gray;
The eldest to the youngest said, 35
"'Tis time we were away."

The cock he hadna crawd but once,
And clappd his wings at a',
When the youngest to the eldest said,
"Brother, we must awa. 40

"The cock doth craw, the day doth daw,
The channerin worm doth chide;
Gin we be mist out o our place,
A sair pain we maun bide.

"Fare ye weel, my mother dear! 45
Fareweel to barn and byre!
And fare ye weel, the bonny lass
That kindles my mother's fire!"

THE MERMAID

Note

The fabulous mermaid, like the sirens and the Lorelei, enticed sailors to their doom or appeared in the raging sea as a bad omen of approaching shipwreck. The following ballad is still widely popular as a college song.

One Friday morn when we set sail,
Not very far from land,
We there did espy a fair pretty maid
With a comb and a glass in her hand,
her hand, her hand,
With a comb and a glass in her hand. 5
While the raging seas did roar,
And the stormy winds did blow,
While we jolly sailor-boys were up into the top,
And the land-lubbers lying down below, below, below,
And the land-lubbers lying down below. 10

Then up starts the captain of our gallant ship,
And a brave young man was he:
"I've a wife and a child in fair Bristol town,
But a widow I fear she will be."

For the raging seas, etc. 15

Then up starts the mate of our gallant ship,
And a bold young man was he:
"Oh! I have a wife in fair Portsmouth town,
But a widow I fear she will be."

For the raging seas, etc. 20

Then up starts the cook of our gallant ship,
And a gruff old soul was he:
"Oh! I have a wife in fair Plymouth town,
But a widow I fear she will be."

For the raging seas, etc. 25

And then up spoke the little cabin-boy,
And a pretty little boy was he;
"Oh! I am more grievd for my daddy and my mammy
Than you for your wives all three."

For the raging seas, etc. 30

Then three times round went our gallant ship,
And three times round went she;
For the want of a life-boat they all went down,
And she sank to the bottom of the sea.

For the raging seas, etc.

41. **daw**, dawn. 42. **channerin**, fretting. 44. **sair**, sore. **maun bide**, must expect. According to a popular superstition, ghosts who did not return to their graves at cock-crow were punished. 46. **byre**, cow-shed.

The Mermaid. 1. **Friday**, an ill-omened day upon which to start a journey. The appearance of the sea-monster was also a bad omen.

HISTORICAL

THE HUNTING OF THE CHEVIOT

Note

It is either to the following ballad or to "The Battle of Otterburn" that Sir Philip Sidney referred in his famous tribute, "I never heard the olde song of Percy and Douglas that I found not my heart mooved more than with a trumpet." Jonson and Addison also praised the ballad account of the heroic struggle between the Scotch and the English knights. The following ballad seems to be a combination of two episodes, the first, a poaching expedition led by Sir Henry Percy of Northumberland (Hotspur) into that part of the Scottish frontier owned or guarded by James, Earl of Douglas, and the second, the Battle of Otterburn, fought August 19, 1388. Of this battle the best account is that contained in Froissart's *Chronicles of England, France, and Spain* (chapter xix). Froissart "learned the particulars of the battle from knights and squires who had been engaged in it on both sides" and described it as "the hardest and most obstinate battle that was ever fought." Historically, the ballad is an unsafe guide in several particulars. For example, the kings of Scotland and England when the events occurred were, respectively, Robert II and Richard II and not "James" and "the fourth Harry," as the ballad has it; moreover, Hotspur was captured but not slain. Places mentioned are on the Scotch-English border; neither they nor the names of the combatants will ordinarily be referred to in the footnotes.

The Persë owt off Northombarlonde,
  and avowe to God mayd he
That he wold hunte in the mowntayns
  off Chyviat within days thre,
In the magger of doughtë Dogles, 5
  and all that ever with him be.

The fattiste hartes in all Cheviat
  he sayd he wold kyll, and cary them
    away.
"Be my feth," sayd the dougheti
  Doglas agayn,
  "I wyll let that hontyng yf that I
    may." 10

Then the Persë owt off Banborowe cam,
  with him a myghtee meany,
With fifteen hondrith archares bold off
    blood and bone;
  the wear chosen owt of shyars thre.

1. **owt off**, i. e., came out of. 2. **avowe**, a vow. 5. **In the magger of**, maugre, in spite of. 10. **let**, hinder (cf. "let ball" in tennis). 12. **meany**, troop. 14. **shyars**, shires.

This begane on a Monday at morn, 15
  in Cheviat the hillys so he;
The chylde may rue that ys unborn,
  it wos the mor pittë.

The dryvars thorowe the woodës went,
  for to reas the dear; 20
Bomen byckarte uppone the bent
  with ther browd aros cleare.

Then the wyld thorowe the woodës went,
  on every sydë shear;
Greahondës thorowe the grevis glent, 25
  for to kyll thear dear.

This begane in Chyviat the hyls abone,
  yerly on a Monnyn-day;
Be that it drewe to the oware off none,
  a hondrith fat hartës ded ther lay. 30

The blewe a mort uppone the bent,
  the semblyde on sydis shear;
To the quyrry then the Persë went,
  to se the bryttlynge off the deare.

He sayd, "It was the Duglas promys 35
  this day to met me hear;
But I wyste he wolde faylle, verament";
  a great oth the Persë swear.

At the laste a squyar off Northomber-
    londe
  lokyde at his hand full ny; 40
He was war a the doughetie Doglas
    commynge,
  with him a myghttë meany.

Both with spear, bylle, and brande,
  yt was a myghtti sight to se;
Hardyar men, both off hart nor hande,
  wear not in Cristiantë. 46

The wear twenti hondrith spear-men
    good,
  withoute any feale;

16. **he**, high. 19. **dryvars**, beaters. 21. **Bomen byckarte**, etc., bowmen ran through the field. 22. **browd aros cleare**, broad, bright arrows. 23. **wyld**, game. 24. **shear**, several (emphasizing *every*). 25. **grevis**, groves. **glent**, flashed. 27. **abone**, above. 28. **yerly on a Monnyn-day**, early on a Monday. 29. **Be that it**, by the time that. **oware off none**, hour of noon. 31. **mort**, a bugle-note announcing the death of the deer. 32. **semblyde**, assembled. **sydis shear**, every side. 33. **quyrry**, quarry, killed game. 34. **bryttlynge**, cutting up. 37. **wyste**, wist, knew. **verament**, truly. 40. **lokyde**, etc., looked not a great distance away. 41. **a**, of. 43. **bylle**, bill, a sort of halberd or battleax. **brande**, sword. 48. **feale**, fail.

The wear borne along be the watter a Twyde,
yth bowndës of Tividale. 50

"Leave of the brytlyng of the dear," he sayd,
"and to your boÿs lock ye tayk good hede;
For never sithe ye wear on your mothars borne
had ye never so mickle nede."

The dougheti Dogglas on a stede, 55
he rode alle his men beforne;
His armor glytteryde as dyd a glede;
a boldar barne was never born.

"Tell me whos men ye ar," he says,
"or whos men that ye be; 60
Who gave youe leave to hunte in this Chyviat chays,
in the spyt of myn and of me."

The first mane that ever him an answear mayd,
yt was the good lord Persë:
"We wyll not tell the whoys men we ar," he says, 65
"nor whos men that we be;
But we wyll hounte hear in this chays,
in the spyt of thyne and of the.

"The fattiste hartës in all Chyviat
we have kyld, and cast to carry them away"; 70
"Be my troth," sayd the doughetë Dogglas agayn,
"therfor the ton of us shall de this day."

Then sayd the doughtë Doglas
unto the lord Persë:
"To kyll alle thes giltles men, 75
alas, it wear great pittë!

"But, Persë, thowe art a lord of lande,
I am a yerle callyd within my contrë;
Let all our men uppone a parti stande,
and do the battell off the and of me."

50. **yth bowndës**, in the borders. 52. **boÿs**, bows. 53. **on**, of. 57. **glede**, glowing coal. 58. **barne**, warrior. 61. **Chyviat chays**, hunting grounds in the Cheviot Hills. 70. **cast**, intend. 72. **ton**, the one. 78. **yerle**, earl. 79. **uppone a parti stande**, stand aside. 80. **do the battell**, etc., let us fight.

"Nowe Cristes cors on his crowne," sayd the lord Persë, 81
"who-so-ever ther-to says nay!
Be my troth, doughttë Doglas," he says,
"thow shalt never se that day.

"Nethar in Ynglonde, Skottlonde, nar France, 85
nor for no man of a woman born,
But, and fortune be my chance,
I dar met him, on man for on."

Then bespayke a squyar off Northombarlonde,
Richard Wytharyngton was his nam:
"It shall never be told in Sothe-Ynglonde," he says, 91
"to Kyng Herry the Fourth for sham.

"I wat youe byn great lordës twaw,
I am a poor squyar of lande;
I wylle never se my captayne fight on a fylde, 95
and stande my selffe and loocke on,
But whylle I may my weppone welde,
I wylle not fayle both hart and hande."

That day, that day, that dredfull day!
the first fit here I fynde; 100
And youe wyll here any mor a the hountyng a the Chyviat,
yet ys ther mor behynde.

The Ynglyshe men hade ther bowys yebent,
ther hartes wer good yenoughe;
The first off arros that the shote off, 105
seven skore spear-men the sloughe.

Yet byddys the yerle Doglas uppon the bent,
a captayne good yenoughe,
And that was sene verament,
for he wrought hom both woo and wouche. 110

81. **cors**, curse. **crowne**, head. 88. **on man for on**, man for man. 92. **Herry the Fourth**. Henry IV did not come to the throne until 1399, eleven years after the Battle of Otterburn. 94. **squyar of lande**, a country squire or gentleman below the rank of the two knights whom he was addressing. 100. **the first fit**, etc., "here I end the first division of my song." In some of the early versions the ballad is marked off into "The First Fit" and "The Second Fit." 101. **And**, if. 107. **byddys**, abides. **bent**, field. 109. **verament**, truly. 110. **wouche**, harm.

The Dogglas partyd his ost in thre,
lyk a cheffe cheften off pryde;
With suar spears off myghttë tre,
the cum in on every syde.

Thrughe our Ynglyshe archery 115
gave many a wounde fulle wyde;
Many a doughetë the garde to dy,
which ganyde them no pryde.

The Ynglyshe men let ther boÿs be,
and pulde owt brandes that wer brighte;
It was a hevy syght to se 121
bryght swordes on basnites lyght.

Thorowe ryche male and myneyeple,
many sterne the strocke done streght;
Many a freyke that was fulle fre, 125
ther undar foot dyd lyght.

At last the Duglas and the Persë met,
lyk to captayns of myght and of mayne;
The swapte togethar tylle the both swat,
with swordes that wear of fyn myllan.

Thes worthë freckys for to fyght, 131
ther-to the wear fulle fayne,
Tylle the bloode owte off thear basnetes sprente,
as ever dyd heal or rayn.

"Yelde the, Persë," sayde the Doglas,
"and i feth I shalle the brynge 136
Wher thowe shalte have a yerls wagis
of Jamy our Skottish kynge.

"Thou shalte have thy ransom fre,
I hight the hear this thinge; 140
For the manfullyste man yet art thowe
that ever I conqueryd in filde fighttynge."

"Nay," sayd the lord Persë,
"I tolde it the beforne,
That I wolde never yeldyde be 145
to no man of a woman born."

With that ther cam an arrowe hastely,
forthe off a myghttë wane;
Hit hathe strekene the yerle Duglas
in at the brest-bane. 150

Thorowe lyvar and longës bathe
The sharpe arrowe ys gane,
That never after in all his lyffe-days
he spayke mo wordës but ane:
That was, "Fyghte ye, my myrry men,
whyllys ye may, 155
for my lyff-days ben gan."

The Persë leanyde on his brande,
and sawe the Duglas de;
He tooke the dede mane by the hande,
and sayd, "Wo ys me for the! 160

"To have savyde thy lyffe I wolde have partyde with
my landes for years thre,
For a better man, of hart nare of hande,
was nat in all the north contrë."

Off all that se a Skottishe knyght, 165
was callyd Ser Hewe the Monggombyrry;
He sawe the Duglas to the deth was dyght,
he spendyd a spear, a trusti tre.

He rod uppone a corsiare
throughe a hondrith archery; 170
He never stynttyde, nar never blane,
tylle he cam to the good lord Persë.

He set uppone the lorde Persë
a dynte that was full soare;
With a suar spear of a myghttë tre 175
clean thorow the body he the Persë ber

A the tothar syde that a man myght se
a large cloth-yard and mare;
Towe bettar captayns wear nat in Cristiantë
then that day slan wear ther. 180

111. **ost**, host. 112. **cheffe cheften**, high chieftain. 113. **suar**, sure. **tre**, tree, i.e., wood. 117. **Many a**, etc., many a brave one they (the Scots) caused to die. 118. **ganyde**, gained. 122. **basnites**, light helmets. 123. **myneyeple**, gantlets (Skeat). 124. **many sterne**, etc., many stern [men] the stroke struck down. 125. **freyke**, brave man. **fre**, bold, spirited. 129. **swapte**, smote. **swat**, sweat. 130. **myllan**, Milan steel. 132. **fulle fayne**, very eager. 133. **sprente**, spurted. 138. **Jamy**. James I of Scotland was not crowned until 1423, ten years after the death of Henry IV; see lines 89 ff. 140. **hight**, promise.

148. **myghttë wane**, "a single arrow out of a vast quantity" (Skeat). 151. **Thorowe**, etc., through both liver and lungs. 165. **Off all**, etc., a Scottish knight saw all this. 166. **Ser Hewe**, etc., Sir Hugh Montgomery. 167. **to the deth was dyght**, was done to death. 168. **spendyd**, got ready. 169. **corsiare**, courser. 171. **stynttyde**, stopped. **blane**, halted. 174. **dynte**, stroke. 176. **ber**, thrust through. 177. **A**, on. 179. **Towe bettar captayns**. In "The Battle of Otterburn," Percy is captured, not killed, and exchanged for Montgomery, who had been taken prisoner by the English.

An archar off Northomberlonde
  say slean was the lord Persë;
He bar a bende bowe in his hand,
  was made off trusti tre.

An arow that a cloth-yarde was lang 185
  to the harde stele halyde he;
A dynt that was both sad and soar
  he sat on Ser Hewe the Monggombyrry.

The dynt yt was both sad and sar,
  that he of Monggomberry sete; 190
The swane-fethars that his arrowe bar
  with his hart-blood the wear wete.

Ther was never a freake wone foot wolde fle,
  but still in stour dyd stand,
Heawyng on yche othar, whylle the myghte dre, 195
  with many a balfull brande.

This battell begane in Chyviat
  an owar befor the none,
And when even-songe bell was rang,
  the battell was nat half done. 200

The tocke . . . . on ethar hande
  be the lyght off the mone;
Many hade no strenght for to stande,
  In Chyviat the hillys abon.

Of fifteen hondrith archars of Ynglonde
  went away but seventi and thre; 206
Of twenti hondrith spear-men of Skotlonde,
  but even five and fifti.

But all wear slayne Cheviat within;
  the hade no strengthe to stand on hy; 210
The chylde may rue that ys unborne,
  it was the mor pittë.

Thear was slayne, withe the lord Persë,
  Ser Johan of Agerstone,
Ser Rogar, the hinde Hartly, 215
  Ser Wyllyam, the bolde Hearone.

186. **halyde**, hauled, i. e., drew it to the head. 194. **stour**, fight. 195. **whylle**, etc., so long as they could hold out. 197. Cf. lines 27 ff. 199. **even-songe bell**, the bell for vespers, six P. M. 201. **The tocke . . . . . .** "they took themselves off, that is, retreated" (Gummere). 210. **on hy**, upright; a naïve description of the dead men. 215. **hinde**, gentle.

Ser Jorg, the worthë Loumle,
  a knyghte of great renowen,
Ser Raff, the ryche Rugbe,
  with dyntes wear beaten dowene. 220

For Wetharryngton my harte was wo,
  that ever he slayne shulde be;
For when both his leggis wear hewyne in to,
  yet he knyled and fought on hys kny.

Ther was slayne, with the dougheti Duglas, 225
  Ser Hewe the Monggombyrry,
Ser Davy Lwdale, that worthë was,
  his sistar's son was he.

Ser Charls a Murrë in that place,
  that never a foot wolde fle; 230
Ser Hewe Maxwelle, a lorde he was,
  with the Doglas dyd he dey.

So on the morrowe the mayde them byears
  off birch and hasell so gray;
Many wedous, with wepyng tears, 235
  cam to fache ther makys away.

Tivydale may carpe off care,
  Northombarlond may mayk great mon,
For towe such captayns as slayne wear thear,
  on the March-parti shall never be non.

Word ys commen to Eddenburrowe, 241
  to Jamy the Skottische kynge,
That dougheti Duglas, lyff-tenant of the Marches,
  he lay slean Chyviot within.

His handdës dyd he weal and wryng,
  he sayd, "Alas, and woe ys me! 246
Such an othar captayn Skotland within,"
  he sayd, "ye-feth shuld never be."

219. **Raff**, Ralph. 223. **hewyne in to**, hewn in two. 233. **byears**, biers. 234. **hasell**, hazel. 235. **wedous**, widows. 236. **fache**, fetch. **makys**, mates. 237. **carpe off care**, tell of sorrow. 240. **March-parti**, borders. 242. **Jamy**. See note on line 138. 243. **lyff-tenant of the Marches**, lieutenant of the border districts. 245. **weal**, clasp. 247. **captayn**. Cf. with lines 255-256, and note from the "brag" that the English are as obviously favored in this ballad as are the Scotch in other ballad versions of the same events.

Worde ys commyn to lovly Londone,
  till the fourth Harry our kynge, 250
That lord Persë, leyff-tenante of the Marchis,
  he lay slayne Chyviat within.

"God have merci on his solle," sayde Kyng Harry,
  "good lord, yf thy will it be!
I have a hondrith captayns in Yng-londe," he sayd, 255
  "as good as ever was he;
But, Persë, and I brook my lyffe,
  thy deth well quyte shall be."

As our noble kynge mayd his avowe,
  lyke a noble prince of renowen, 260
For the deth of the lord Persë
  he dyde the battell of Hombyll-down;

Wher syx and thrittë Skottishe knyghtes
  on a day wear beaten down;
Glendale glytteryde on ther armor bryght, 265
  over castille, towar, and town.

This was the hontynge off the Cheviat,
  that tear begane this spurn;
Old men that knowen the grownde well yenoughe
  call it the battell of Otterburn. 270

At Otterburn begane this spurne
  uppone a Monnynday;
Ther was the doughtë Doglas slean,
  the Persë never went away.

Ther was never a tym on the Marche-partës 275
  sen the Doglas and the Persë met,
But yt ys mervele and the rede blude ronne not,
  as the reane doys in the stret.

Jhesue Crist our balys bete,
  and to the blys us brynge! 280
Thus was the hountynge of the Chivyat
  God send us alle good endyng!

250. **Harry.** See note on line 92. 257. **brook,** enjoy. 258. **quyte,** avenged. 262. The Scots were defeated at Homildon Hill, September 14, 1402. 268. **tear,** etc., there (i. e., in the Cheviots) began this fight—one of several guesses, based partly on the next stanza, at the meaning of a difficult line. 277. **yt ys,** etc., it is a marvel if the red blood does not run as rain does in the street. 279. **balys bete,** relieve our sorrows.

SIR PATRICK SPENS

Note

There have been various guesses by Sir Walter Scott and others as to the historical basis of this heroic old ballad of the sea, but there is no authentic record of the events. Nevertheless, it is sufficiently circumstantial to suggest actual occurrence, and may reasonably be classed as historical. Its popular flavor appears best in the naïve conceptions expressed of the mode of living of king and nobility.

The king sits in Dumferling toune,
  Drinking the blude-reid wine:
"O whar will I get guid sailor,
  To sail this schip of mine?"

Up and spak an eldern knicht, 5
  Sat at the kings richt kne:
"Sir Patrick Spens is the best sailor,
  That sails upon the se."

The king has written a braid letter,
  And signd it wi his hand, 10
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spens,
  Was walking on the sand.

The first line that Sir Patrick red,
  A loud lauch lauchéd he;
The next line that Sir Patrick red, 15
  The teir blinded his ee.

"O wha is this has don this deid,
  This ill deid don to me,
To send me out this time o' the yeir,
  To sail upon the se! 20

"Mak hast, mak haste, my mirry men all,
  Our guid schip sails the morne."
"O say na sae, my master deir,
  For I feir a deadlie storme.

"Late, late yestreen I saw the new moone, 25
  Wi the auld moone in hir arme,
And I feir, I feir, my deir master,
  That we will cum to harme."

1. **Dumferling toune,** Dunfermline, across the Firth of Forth from Edinburgh. The "king" has been identified with Alexander III (1249-1285) and also with James III (1460-1488). 5. **knicht,** ch=gh, here and elsewhere in the ballad. 9. **braid,** open (Percy); it may refer, however, simply to the broad sheet. 25. **new moone,** etc., the crescent moon with the old moon showing between the horns, a sign of bad weather.

O our Scots nobles wer richt laith
To weet their cork-heild schoone; 30
Bot lang owre a' the play wer playd,
Thair hats they swam aboone.

O lang, lang may their ladies sit,
Wi thair fans into their hand,
Or eir they se Sir Patrick Spens 35
Cum sailing to the land.

O lang, lang may the ladies stand,
Wi thair gold kems in their hair,
Waiting for thair ain deir lords,
For they'll se thame na mair. 40

Haf owre, haf owre to Aberdour,
It's fiftie fadom deip,
And thair lies guid Sir Patrick Spens,
Wi the Scots lords at his feit.

OUTLAWRY

JOHNIE ARMSTRONG

Note

The bold robber has always been a romantic and attractive figure, especially where, as with Robin Hood, he robbed the rich to give to the poor. Though Johnie Armstrong warred on society, he seemed to those who sang his praises just as heroic as any conventional knight who ever sat in saddle, and he earned the admiration due brave fighters. His death, in the summer of 1530, during the reign of King James V of Scotland, occurred under conditions of treachery similar to those related in the ballad.

There dwelt a man in faire Westmerland,
Jonnë Armestrong men did him call,
He had nither lands nor rents coming in,
Yet he kept eight score men in his hall.

He had horse and harness for them all, 5
Goodly steeds were all milke-white:

30. **cork-heild schoone**, cork-heeled shoes. Cf. note on line 34. 32. **aboone**, above them. 34. **Wi thair fans**, etc. Here and in the next stanza note the popular idea of the nobility. 41. **haf owre to Aberdour**, halfway home to Aberdeen, on the east coast of Scotland, where the wreck occurred.

Johnie Armstrong. 1. **Westmerland**, incorrect; Westmorland is in northwestern England, but Johnie was a Scot. 3. **nither lands nor rents.** This is a delicate way of hinting that Johnie lived well on other men's property.

O the golden bands an about their necks,
And their weapons, they were all alike.

Newes then was brought unto the king
That there was sicke a won as hee, 10
That livëd lyke a bold out-law,
And robbëd all the north country.

The king he writt an a letter then,
A letter which was large and long;
He signëd it with his owne hand, 15
And he promised to doe him no wrong.

When this letter came Jonnë untill,
His heart it was as blythe as birds on the tree:
"Never was I sent for before any king,
My father, my grandfather, nor none but mee. 20

"And if wee goe the king before,
I would we went most orderly;
Every man of you shall have his scarlet cloak,
Laced with silver laces three.

"Every won of you shall have his velvett coat, 25
Laced with sillver lace so white;
O the golden bands an about your necks,
Black hatts, white feathers, all alyke."

By the morrow morninge at ten of the clock,
Toward Edenburough gon was hee,
And with him all his eight score men; 31
Good lord, it was a goodly sight for to see!

When Jonnë came befower the king,
He fell downe on his knee;
"O pardon, my soveraine leige," he said,
"O pardon my eight score men and mee!" 36

"Thou shalt have no pardon, thou traytor strong,
For thy eight score men nor thee;

7. **an.** This word is inserted merely for the meter. 10. **sicke a won**, such a one.

For tomorrow morning by ten of the clock,
Both thou and them shall hang on the gallow-tree." 40

But Jonnë looked over his left shoulder,
Good Lord, what a grevious look looked hee!
Saying, "Asking grace of a graceles face—
Why there is nonë for you nor me."

But Jonnë had a bright sword by his side, 45
And it was made of the mettle so free,
That had not the king stept his foot aside,
He had smitten his head from his faire boddë.

Saying, "Fight on, my merry men all,
And see that none of you be taine; 50
For rather than men shall say we were hanged,
Let them report how we were slaine."

Then, God wott, faire Eddenburrough rose,
And so besett poore Jonnë rounde,
That fower score and tenn of Jonnës best men 55
Lay gasping all upon the ground.

Then like a mad man Jonnë laide about,
And like a mad man then fought hee,
Untill a falce Scot came Jonnë behinde,
And runn him through the faire boddee. 60

Saying, "Fight on, my merry men all,
And see that none of you be taine;
For I will stand by and bleed but awhile,
And then will I come and fight againe."

Newes then was brought to young Jonnë Armestrong, 65
As he stood by his nurses knee,
Who vowed if ere he lived for to be a man,
O the treacherous Scots revengd hee'd be.

46. so free, probably just for the rime. 68. O, on.

ROBIN HOOD AND ALLIN A DALE

NOTE

When England was heavily forested, and the game was protected by savage forest laws, many brave yeomen ranged the woods and lived by hunting and robbing. Of these bold outlaws the most famous was Robin Hood, a semi-legendary forester who lived with his "merry men" in Sherwood Forest in Nottinghamshire. His deeds are celebrated in so many ballads that the whole forms a popular half-epic cycle. Tradition identified him with an outlawed nobleman, the Earl of Huntington, but in the earliest ballads he is of unmistakable yeoman stock. But he was as courteous as a courtier, graceful in manner, and, of course, skillful in woodcraft and daring in deed. Readers of Scott's *Ivanhoe* will remember that he lived, traditionally, in the reign of Richard I (1189-1199), and that among the famous men in his band were Friar Tuck, Little John, Will Scarlet, Midge the miller's son, Allin a Dale, and numerous others. The ballads of Robin Hood reflect the social revolt of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; he is invariably represented as loyal to the king but hostile to sheriffs and all oppressors of the poor. The bride-stealing theme in the following ballad is very popular in all ballad and folklore literature.

Come listen to me, you gallants so free,
All you that loves mirth for to hear,
And I will you tell of a bold outlaw,
That lived in Nottinghamshire.
(*Twice.*)
As Robin Hood in the forrest stood, 5
All under the green-wood tree,
There he was ware of a brave young man,
As fine as fine might be.

The youngster was cloathed in scarlet red,
In scarlet fine and gay, 10
And he did frisk it over the plain,
And chanted a roundelay.

As Robin Hood next morning stood,
Amongst the leaves so gay,
There did he espy the same young man
Come drooping along the way. 16

The scarlet he wore the day before,
It was clean cast away;
And every step he fetcht a sigh,
"Alack and a well a day!" 20

4. Twice. The fourth line of each stanza is to be repeated.

Then stepped forth brave Little John,
And Nick the miller's son,
Which made the young man bend his bow,
When as he see them come.

"Stand off, stand off," the young man said; 25
"What is your will with me?"
"You must come before our master straight,
Under yon green-wood tree."

And when he came bold Robin before,
Robin askt him courteously, 30
"O hast thou any money to spare
For my merry men and me?"

"I have no money," the young man said,
"But five shillings and a ring;
And that I have kept this seven long years, 35
To have it at my wedding.

"Yesterday I should have married a maid,
But she is now from me tane,
And chosen to be an old knight's delight,
Whereby my poor heart is slain." 40

"What is thy name?" then said Robin Hood,
"Come tell me, without any fail."
"By the faith of my body," then said the young man,
"My name it is Allin a Dale."

"What wilt thou give me," said Robin Hood, 45
"In ready gold or fee,
To help thee to thy true-love again,
And deliver her unto thee?"

"I have no money," then quoth the young man,
"No ready gold nor fee, 50
But I will swear upon a book
Thy true servant for to be."

"How many miles is it to thy true-love?
Come tell me without any guile."

22. **Nick.** The name is *Midge* in most versions. 46. **fee,** goods, property.

"By the faith of my body," then said the young man, 55
"It is but five little mile."

Then Robin he hasted over the plain,
He did neither stint nor lin,
Until he came unto the church,
Where Allin should keep his wedding. 60

"What dost thou do here?" the bishop he said,
"I prethee now tell to me."
"I am a bold harper," quoth Robin Hood,
"And the best in the north countrey."

"O welcome, O welcome," the bishop he said, 65
"That musick best pleaseth me";
"You shall have no musick," quoth Robin Hood,
"Till the bride and the bridegroom I see."

With that came in a wealthy knight,
Which was both grave and old, 70
And after him a finikin lass,
Did shine like the glistering gold.

"This is no fit match," quoth bold Robin Hood,
"That you do seem to make here;
For since we are come unto the church, 75
The bride she shall chuse her own dear."

Then Robin Hood put his horn to his mouth,
And blew blasts two or three;
When four and twenty bowmen bold
Came leaping over the lee. 80

And when they came into the churchyard,
Marching all on a row,
The first man was Allin a Dale,
To give bold Robin his bow.

"This is thy true-love," Robin he said, 85
"Young Allin, as I hear say;

58. **stint nor lin,** hesitate nor stop. 71. **finikin,** fine, well-dressed. 80. **lee,** lea, meadow.

And you shall be married at this same time,
Before we depart away."

"That shall not be," the bishop he said,
"For thy word shall not stand; 90
They shall be three times askt in the church,
As the law is of our land."

Robin Hood pulld off the bishop's coat,
And put it upon Little John;
"By the faith of my body," then Robin said, 95
"This cloath doth make thee a man."

When Little John went into the quire,
The people began for to laugh;
He askt them seven times in the church,
Lest three times should not be enough.

"Who gives me this maid?" then said Little John; 101
Quoth Robin, "That do I,
And he that doth take her from Allin a Dale
Full dearly he shall her buy."

And thus having ended this merry wedding, 105
The bride lookt as fresh as a queen,
And so they returned to the merry greenwood,
Amongst the leaves so green.

ROBIN HOOD'S DEATH AND BURIAL

Note

No cycle of hero songs is complete without one which tells of the death of the hero. Usually, as here, the end comes through treachery; cf. the death of Roland and of King Arthur in the romances.

When Robin Hood and Little John,
Down a down, a down, a down,
Went oer yon bank of broom,
Said Robin Hood bold to Little John,
"We have shot for many a pound." 5
Hey down, a down, a down.

"But I am not able to shoot one shot more,
My broad arrows will not flee;
But I have a cousin lives down below,
Please God, she will bleed me." 10

Now Robin is to fair Kirkly gone,
As fast as he can win;
But before he came there, as we do hear,
He was taken very ill.

And when he came to fair Kirkly-hall,
He knockd all at the ring, 16
But none was so ready as his cousin herself
For to let bold Robin in.

"Will you please to sit down, cousin Robin," she said,
"And drink some beer with me?" 20
"No, I will neither eat nor drink,
Till I am blooded by thee."

"Well, I have a room, cousin Robin," she said,
"Which you did never see,
And if you please to walk therein, 25
You blooded by me shall be."

She took him by the lily-white hand,
And led him to a private room,
And there she blooded bold Robin Hood,
While one drop of blood would run down. 30

She blooded him in a vein of the arm,
And locked him up in the room;
There did he bleed all the livelong day,
Until the next day at noon.

He then bethought him of a casement there, 35
Thinking for to get down;
But was so weak he could not leap,
He could not get him down.

He then bethought him of his bugle-horn,
Which hung low down to his knee; 40
He set his horn unto his mouth,
And blew out weak blasts three.

91. **three times**, etc. The reference is to "publishing the banns," the public announcement of an approaching marriage. 96. **cloath**, robe.

Robin Hood's Death and Burial. 2, 6. **Down a down**, etc. This refrain is to be repeated in every stanza.

10. **bleed me.** Phlebotomy, or bleeding, was the usual treatment for all ailments. 12. **win**, go. 12-14. **win . . . ill.** Many ballad rimes are very rough. 16. **ring**, door-knocker. 42. **blew**, etc. Roland, in the French romance, summons help with a dying blast on his famous horn.

Then Little John, when hearing him,
As he sat under a tree,
"I fear my master is now near dead, 45
He blows so wearily."

Then Little John to fair Kirkly is gone,
As fast as he can dree;
But when he came to Kirkly-hall,
He broke locks two or three; 50

Until he came bold Robin to see,
Then he fell on his knee:
"A boon, a boon," cries Little John,
"Master, I beg of thee."

"What is that boon," said Robin Hood,
"Little John, thou begs of me?" 56
"It is to burn fair Kirkly-hall,
And all their nunnery."

"Now nay, now nay," quoth Robin Hood,
"That boon I'll not grant thee; 60
I never hurt woman in all my life,
Nor men in woman's company.

"I never hurt fair maid in all my time,
Nor at mine end shall it be;
But give me my bent bow in my hand, 65
And a broad arrow I'll let flee;
And where this arrow is taken up,
There shall my grave digged be.

"Lay me a green sod under my head,
And another at my feet; 70
And lay my bent bow by my side,
Which was my music sweet;
And make my grave of gravel and green,
Which is most right and meet.

"Let me have length and breadth enough, 75
With a green sod under my head;
That they may say, when I am dead,
Here lies bold Robin Hood."

These words they readily granted him,
Which did bold Robin please; 80
And there they buried bold Robin Hood,
Within the fair Kirkleys.

48. **can dree**, is able. 74. **meet**, suitable. 82. **Within**, not in the nunnery, of course, but in the neighborhood of it.

HUMOROUS

THE FARMER'S CURST WIFE

NOTE

Most humorous ballads turn on the ancient theme of the shrewish wife and the henpecked husband or on the equally satirical situation of the old husband who is made a fool of by a young wife and her lover. The woman who was so much of a devil that hell was glad to get rid of her appears frequently, as, for example, in John Heywood's *The Foure PP.*, a rollicking play, written early in the sixteenth century.

There was an old farmer in Sussex did dwell,
(*Chorus of whistlers*)
There was an old farmer in Sussex did dwell,
And he had a bad wife, as many knew well.
(*Chorus of whistlers*)

Then Satan came to the old man at the plow:
"One of the family I must have now. 5

"It is not your eldest son that I crave,
But it is your old wife, and she I will have."

"O welcome, good Satan, with all my heart!
I hope you and she will never more part."

Now Satan has got the old wife on his back, 10
And he lugged her along, like a peddler's pack.

He trudged away till they came to his hall-gate;
Says he, "Here, take in an old Sussex chap's mate."

O then she did kick the young imps about;
Says one to the other, "Let's try turn her out." 15

She spied thirteen imps all dancing in chains;
She up with her pattens and beat out their brains.

17. **pattens**, slippers with wooden soles.

She knocked the old Satan against the wall.
"Let's turn her out, or she'll murder us all."

Now he's bundled her up on his back amain, 20
And to her old husband he took her again.

"I have been a tormentor the whole of my life,
But I neer was tormented so as with your wife."

GET UP AND BAR THE DOOR

Note

A typical comic contest between a country couple. Usually the stubborn wife wins the match; sometimes, however, as in "The Wife Wrapt in Wether's Skin," the husband outwits and tames the shrew. The following ballad appears in America (see Cox's *Folk-Songs of the South*, page 516), where the old man is John Jones and the old woman Jane.

It fell about the Martinmas time,
And a gay time it was then,
When our goodwife got puddings to make,
And she's boild them in the pan.

The wind sae cauld blew south and north, 5
And blew into the floor;
Quoth our goodman to our goodwife,
"Gae out and bar the door."

"My hand is in my hussyfskap,
Goodman, as ye may see; 10
An it shoud nae be barrd this hundred year,
It's no be barrd for me."

They made a paction tween them twa,
They made it firm and sure,
That the first word whaeer shoud speak,
Shoud rise and bar the door. 16

Then by there came two gentlemen,
At twelve o'clock at night,

1. **Martinmas time**, November 11. 9. **hussyfskap**, household tasks. 13. **paction**, compact.

And they could neither see house nor hall,
Nor coal nor candlelight. 20

"Now whether is this a rich man's house,
Or whether is it a poor?"
But neer a word wad ane o' them speak,
For barring of the door.

And first they ate the white puddings,
And then they ate the black; 26
Tho muckle thought the goodwife to hersel,
Yet neer a word she spake.

Then said the one unto the other,
"Here, man, tak ye my knife; 30
Do ye tak aff the auld man's beard,
And I'll kiss the goodwife."

"But there's nae water in the house,
And what shall we do than?"
"What ails ye at the pudding-broo, 35
That boils into the pan?"

O up then started our goodman,
An angry man was he:
"Will ye kiss my wife before my een,
And scad me wi pudding-bree?" 40

Then up and started our goodwife,
Gied three skips on the floor:
"Goodman, you've spoken the foremost word;
Get up and bar the door."

19. **hall**, mansion; cf. next stanza—or perhaps the phrase was added just to fill out the line. 23. **them**, i. e., the man and his wife. 24. **For**, because of. 25. **they**, the unbidden guests. This line and the following one introduce a familiar ballad formula. 27. **muckle**, much. 35. **What ails**, etc., why not use the water in which the puddings were boiled? 40. **scad**, scald.

AMERICAN

THE SHANTY BOY

Note

Many of the old English and Scottish popular ballads are still sung in America. To these have been added a great number of home-grown ballads, which are to be found especially among the cowboys and lumberjacks and wherever else conditions are favorable to their development. The following semi-burlesque ballad of tragic love is a product of the lumber-camp. For it the editors

are indebted to Mrs. A. C. Campbell of Bronxville, New York, who heard it sung while she was a girl in the logging camps of northern Wisconsin. All places referred to are in Wisconsin, and the occupational allusions, such as the hop-picking in Baraboo, are entirely accurate. For some of the footnotes the editors are indebted to Mr. David E. Scull of New York. In Franz Rickaby's *Ballads and Songs of the Shanty-Boy* the ballad is ascribed to Shan T. Boy (pseudonym of Mr. W. N. Allen).

Every maid has her troubles,
Likewise every man has his,
But few there are that can compare
With the following story, viz:
It relates about the affection 5
Of a damsel young and fair,
For an interesting shanty boy
Upon the Big Eau Claire.

This young and artless maiden
Was of noble pedigree; 10
Her mother kept a milliner shop
In the town of Mosinee.
She sold waterfalls and ribbons
And imitation lace
To all the high-toned people 15
Of that gay and festive place.

The shanty boy was handsome,
And a taking lad was he.
In the summer time he tail-sawed
In a mill at Mosinee. 20
And when the early winter blew
Its cold and biting breeze,
He worked upon the Big Eau Claire
A-chopping down pine trees.

He had a heavy mustache 25
And a curly head of hair;
A prettier man than he was
Never saw the Big Eau Claire.
This aforesaid milliner's daughter
He loved her long and well; 30
But circumstances happened
And this is what befell:

The milliner said a shanty boy
Her daughter ne'er should wed;
But Susan didn't seem to care 35
For what her mother said.
So the milliner packed her ribbons up,
And went and hired a hack
And opened up another shop
Down in Fond du Lac. 40

Then Sue was broken-hearted
And weary of her life;
For she dearly loved the shanty boy
And longed to be his wife.
And when brown autumn came along
And ripened all the crops, 46
She lighted out to Baraboo
And went to picking hops.

But in the occupation
She found but little joy; 50
Her thoughts were still reverting
To her dear shanty boy.
She caught the scarlet fever
And lay a week or two
In a suburban pesthouse 55
In the town of Baraboo.

And often in her ravings she
Would tear her auburn hair
And talk about her shanty boy
Upon the Big Eau Claire. 60
The doctors tried, but all in vain,
Her helpless life to save.
Now millions of young hop mice
Are prancing o'er her grave.

When the tidings reached the shanty boy,
His business he did leave. 66
His emotional insanity
Was fearful to perceive.
He hid his saw in a hollow log
And traded off his ax; 70
And hired himself for a sailor
On a fleet of sailor jacks.

But still no peace or comfort
He anywhere could find;
The milliner's daughter's funeral 75
Came so frequent to his mind.
He often prayed that death would come
And end his woe and grief;
And grim death took him at his word
And furnished him relief. 80

For he fell off a rapids piece
On the falls at Mosinee,
And ended thus his fearful love

7. **shanty boy,** cant name for lumberjack. 13. **waterfall,** chignon, or mass of artificial curled hair formerly worn by women at the back of the head. 19. **tail-sawed.** "Tailing the saw" is the operation of taking away the lumber after it has been sawed.

72. **sailor jacks.** *Sailor Jack's* in versions published by Rickaby, who notes that "Sailor Jack" O'Brien was a widely known pilot on the Wisconsin River in the eighteen-seventies. 81. **rapids piece,** a log, or stick of timber, on which he was riding the rapids.

And all his misery.
The bold Wisconsin River rolls 85
Its waves above his bones;
His comrades they are catfish,
And his grave a pile of stones.

The milliner she is bankrupt,
Her shop is gone to rack, 90
She talks quite strong of moving
Away from Fond du Lac;
For her pillow oft is haunted
By her daughter's auburn hair,
And the ghost of that young shanty boy 95
Upon the Big Eau Claire.

And this should be a warning
To other maidens fair,
To take no stock in shanty boys
Upon the Big Eau Claire; 100
And seek for solid comfort
And bliss without alloy
And play their points according
For some gentle farmer boy.

JESSE JAMES

Note

In America, as in early England, the highwayman was a popular figure. Jesse James was the leader of a notorious gang of outlaws operating in Missouri. For sixteen years he lived with a price on his head, but was finally shot and killed at St. Joseph, Missouri, by Robert and Charles Ford, members of his own gang, who surrendered to the authorities and collected the ten thousand dollars offered by the governor of the state. The ballads dealing with the exploits and death of James show the same sympathetic attitude toward him as appeared toward Robin Hood in the Robin Hood Songs. James's resistance to authority, his boldness, and his kindness to the poor combined to elevate him to popular favor. The following version is reprinted from Professor Pound's *American Ballads and Songs*, page 145.

How the people held their breath
When they heard of Jesse's death,
And wondered how he came to die;
For the big reward little Robert Ford
Shot Jesse James on the sly. 5

Jesse leaves a widow to mourn all her life;
The children he left will pray
For the thief and the coward
Who shot Mr. Howard
And laid Jesse James in his grave. 10

Jesse was a man,
A friend to the poor,
Never did he suffer a man's pain;
And with his brother Frank
He robbed the Chicago bank, 15
And stopped the Glendale train.

Jesse goes to rest
With his hand on his breast,
And the devil will be upon his knees;
He was born one day in the county of Clay, 20
And came from a great race.

Men, when you go out to the West,
Don't be afraid to die;
With the law in their hand,
But they didn't have the sand 25
For to take Jesse James alive.

97 ff. **a warning**, etc. Many of the homespun American ballads wind up with a moral; here, of course, the lumberjack comes in for a bit of good-humored banter.

O BURY ME NOT ON THE LONE PRAIRIE

Note

Groups of workers cut off from civilization for a considerable part of the year often make their own ballads. Sometimes these are adaptations of popular songs; frequently they are original. They deal usually with the hardships and occupational difficulties of the singers and are often highly sentimental. Many such songs have appeared among the lumberjacks of the northern states; a more considerable number are ballads of the cow-camps and cattle-trails. The following ballad, which is also known as "The Dying Cowboy," is an adaptation of the once popular song, "Ocean Burial," and deals with a favorite subject in sentimental poetry, the lonely death of a young man far from home and family. It is, of course, more lyrical than narrative. The poem is credited by W. H. Saunders, in *Songs of the Cowboys*, to H. Clemons, Deadwood, Dakota, 1872; it appears also in Professor Pound's *American Ballads and Songs*, page 171, from which collection it was reprinted here.

"O bury me not on the lone prairie";
These words came slowly and mournfully
From the pallid lips of a youth who lay
On his cold damp bed at the close of day.

8. **thief and coward**, Robert Ford, who shot James and Howard in April, 1882.

"O bury me not on the lone prairie 5
Where the wild coyote will howl o'er me,
Where the cold wind weeps and the grasses wave;
No sunbeams rest on a prairie grave."

He has wasted and pined till o'er his brow
Death's shades are slowly gathering now; 10
He thought of his home with his loved ones nigh,
As the cowboys gathered to see him die.

Again he listened to well-known words,
To the wind's soft sigh and the song of birds;
He thought of his home and his native bowers, 15
Where he loved to roam in his childhood hours.

"I've ever wished that when I died,
My grave might be on the old hillside;
Let there the place of my last rest be—
O bury me not on the lone prairie! 20

"O'er my slumbers a mother's prayer
And a sister's tears will be mingled there;
For 'tis sad to know that the heart-throb's o'er,
And that its fountain will gush no more.

"In my dreams I say"—but his voice failed there; 25
And they gave no heed to his dying prayer;
In a narrow grave six feet by three,
They buried him there on the lone prairie.

May the light-winged butterfly pause to rest
O'er him who sleeps on the prairie's crest; 30
May the Texas rose in the breezes wave
O'er him who sleeps in a prairie's grave.

And the cowboys now, as they roam the plain
(For they marked the spot where his bones have lain), 35
Fling a handful of roses over his grave,
With a prayer to Him who his soul will save.

BROADSIDE BALLADS

A DESCRIPTION OF A STRANGE FISH

NOTE

A broadside, or stall, ballad reprinted from *A Pepysian Garland* (page 438), edited by Professor Hyder E. Rollins for the Cambridge Press. These journalistic ballads were usually written by hack-poets and dealt with the same varieties of sensational, unusual, and morbid themes as appear today in "yellow" journals. The following account of the strange fish cast ashore in Cheshire, on the east coast of England, is typical of the incredible marvels which the broadside ballads report; the usual discount for fish stories should be given this yarn. Note the poet's initials and the advertisement at the end of the ballad. The three omitted stanzas describe various parts of the fish.

A DESCRIPTION OF A STRANGE (AND MIRACULOUS) FISH, CAST UPON THE SANDS IN THE MEADS, IN THE HUNDRED OF *Worwell*, IN THE COUNTY PALATINE OF *Chester* (OR *Chesshiere*). THE CERTAINTY WHEREOF IS HERE RELATED CONCERNING THE SAID MOST MONSTROUS FISH.

To the Tune of Bragandary*

[Woodcut of the fish]

Of many maruels in my time
I'ue heretofore,
But here's a stranger now in prime
that's lately come on shore,
Inuites my pen to specifie 5
What some (I doubt) will think a lie.
O rare
beyond compare,
in England nere the like.

***Bragandary.** In the broadside ballads the melody or tune is usually indicated. **1. maruels.** The *u* and the *v* are frequently interchanged in the ballad. **2. heretofore,** either "heard of before" or "I've written about heretofore."

It is a fish, a monstrous fish, 10
a fish that many dreads,
But now it is as we would wish,
cast vp o'th sands i'th meads,
In *Chesshiere;* and tis certaine true,
Described by those who did it view. 15
O rare,
beyond compare,
in England nere the like.

Full twenty one yards and one foot
this fish extends in length, 20
With all things correspondent too't,
for amplitude and strength:
Good people what I shall report,
Doe not account it fained sport.
O rare, 25
beyond compare,
in England nere the like.

It is almost fiue yards in height,
which is a wondrous thing,
Oh, mark what maruels to our sight 30
our Potent Lord can bring.
These secrets *Neptune* closely keeps
Within the bosome of the deeps.
O rare, etc.

His lower jaw-bone's fiue yards long, 35
the vpper thrice so much,
Twelve yoak of oxen stout and strong
(the weight of it is such)
Could not once stir it out o'th sands.
Thus works the All-creating hands. 40
O rare, etc.

Some haue a project now in hand,
(which is a tedious taske)
When the Sea turnes, to bring to Land
the same with empty cask: 45
But how I cannot well conceiue,
To each mans judgement that I leaue.
O rare, etc.

The lower jaw-bone named of late,
had teeth in't thirty foure, 50
Whereof some of them are in weight
two pounds, or rather more:
There were no teeth i'th vpper jaw,
But holes, which many people saw.
O rare, etc. 55

30. **Oh, mark,** etc. Note the characteristic tendency here and elsewhere to weave a pious moral into the ballad.

The Second Part, to the Same Tune†

. . . . . .

The tongue on't is so mighty large,
I will it not expresse,
Lest I your credit ouer-charge,
but you may easily guesse,
That sith his shape so far excels, 60
The tongue doth answer all parts else.
O rare, etc.

A man on horseback as tis try'd
may stand within his mouth,
Let none that hears it this deride, 65
for tis confirmed for truth:
By those who dare auouch the same,
Then let the Writer beare no blame.
O rare, etc.

. . . . . .

Already sixteene tuns of Oyle 70
is from this fish extracted,
And yet continually they boyle,
No season is protracted:
It cannot be imagin'd how much 74
'Twill yeeld, the vastnesse on't is such.
O rare, etc.

When he vpon the sands was cast
aliue, which was awhile:
He yell'd so loud, that many (agast)
heard him aboue sixe mile: 80
Tis said the Female fish likewise
Was heard to mourne with horrid cryes:
O rare, etc.

The Mariners of *Chester* say
a Herring-hog tis nam'd: 85
Whatere it be, for certaine they
that are for knowledge fam'd,
Affirme, the like in ages past
Upon our Coast was neuer cast.
O rare, etc. 90

M. P.

Printed at London for *Thomas Lambert,* at the sign of the Hors-shoo in Smithfield.

There is a book to satisfie such as desire a larger description hereof.

†**The Second Part.** This followed a mechanical division in the printing. 73. **No season,** etc. There is no postponement of the operation. 82. **to mourne.** The idea of the sea creature mourning for her mate is a superstition frequently expressed. 85. **Herring-hog,** porpoise.

A WARNING FOR ALL DESPERATE WOMEN

Note

Accounts of murders in the form of confessions or "good-nights" by the murderers, with a solemn "warning" at the conclusion, appear repeatedly in the journalistic ballads of England and America. They are based, of course, upon actual crimes. The following lamentable tale of Mrs. Davis is matched in American balladry by the confessions of John Hardy (Cox's *Folk-Songs of the South*, page 175), Charles J. Guiteau, the assassin of President Garfield (Pound's *American Ballads and Songs*, page 146), and numerous others. The following broadside ballad is reprinted from *A Pepysian Garland* (page 288).

A WARNING FOR ALL DESPERATE WOMEN. BY THE EXAMPLE OF *Alice Dauis* WHO FOR KILLING OF HER HUSBAND WAS BURNED IN SMITHFIELD THE 12 OF JULY 1628. TO THE TERROR OF ALL THE BEHOLDERS.

To the Tune of The Ladies Fall

Vnto the world to make my moane,
I know it is a folly,
Because that I have spent my time,
which haue beene free and iolly,
But to the Lord which rules aboue, 5
I doe for mercy crie,
To grant me pardon for the crime,
for which on earth I dye.

Hells fiery flames prepared are,
for those that liue in sinne, 10
And now on earth I tast of some,
but as a pricke or pin,
To those which shall hereafter be,
without Gods mercy great,
Who once more calls vs to account, 15
on his Tribunall Seate.

Then hasty hairebraind wiues take heed,
of me a warning take,
Least like to me in coole of blood,
you burn't be at a stake; 20
The woman which heere last did dye,
and was consum'd with fire,
Puts me in minde, but all to late,
for death I doe require.

But to the story now I come, 25
which to you Ile relate,
Because that I haue liu'd like some,
in good repute and state,
In Westminster we liu'd there,
well knowne by many friends, 30
Which little thought that each of vs,
should haue come to such ends.

A Smith my husband was by trade,
as many well doe know,
And diuers merry dayes we had, 35
not feeling cause of woe,
Abroad together we had bin,
and home at length we came,
But then I did that fatall deede,
which brings me to this shame. 40

He askt what monies I had left,
and some he needes would haue,
But I a penny would not giue,
though he did seeme to craue,
But words betwixt vs then did passe, 45
as words to harsh I gaue,
And as the Diuell would as then,
I did both sweare and raue.

The Second Part, to the Same Tune

And then I tooke a little knife,
and stabb'd him in the heart. 50
Whose Soule from Body instantly,
my bloody hand did part,
But cursed hand, and fatall knife,
and wicked was that houre,
When as my God did giue me ore 55
vnto his hellish power.

The deede no sooner I had don,
but out of doores I ran,
And to the neighbours I did cry,
I kill'd had my goodman, 60
Who straight-way flockt vnto my house,
to see that bloody sight,
Which when they did behold with griefe,
it did them much affright.

Then hands vpon me there was lay'd, 65
and I to Prison sent,
Where as I lay perplext in woe,
and did that deede repent,

56. **his.** The antecedent is *Diuell*, line 47.

When Sizes came I was arraign'd,
by Iury iust and true, 70
I was found guilty of the fact,
for which I haue my due.

The Iury having cast me then,
to iudgment then I came,
Which was a terrour to my heart, 75
and to my friends a shame,
To thinke vpon my husbands death,
and of my wretched life,
Betwixt my Spirit and my flesh,
did cause a cruell strife. 80

But then the Iudge me sentence gaue
to goe from whence I came,
From thence, vnto a stake be bound
to burne in fiers flame,
Untill my flesh and bones consum'd, 85
to ashes in that place,
Which was a heauie sentence then,
to on so uoyd of grace.

And on the twelfth of Iuly now,
I on a sledge was laid; 90
To Smithfield with a guard of men
I streight way was conueyd,
Where I was tyed to a stake,
with Reedes as round beset,
And Fagots, Pitch, and other things 95
which they for me did get.

Now great *Iehouah* I thee pray,
my bloudy sinnes forgiue,
For on this earth most wretched I
vnworthy am to liue. 100
Christ Iesus vnto thee I pray,
and vnto thee I cry,
Thou with thy blood wilt wash my sinnes
away, which heere must dye.

Good wiues and bad, example take, 105
at this my cursed fall,
And Maidens that shall husbands haue,
I warning am to all:
Your husbands are your Lords and heads,
you ought them to obey; 110
Grant loue betwixt each man and wife,
vnto the Lord I pray.

God and the world forgiue my sinnes,
which are so vile and foule,

69. **Sizes**, assizes, trials by jury. 71. **fact**, act, or deed. 73. **cast**, voted on. 91. **Smithfield**, the open country north of London, where criminals were burned at the stake.

Sweete Iesus now I come to thee, 115
O Lord receiue my Soule.
Then to the Reedes they fire did put,
which flamd vp to the skye,
And then she shriek'd most pitti-
fully,
before that she did dye. 120

The Lord preserue our King & Queene,
and all good Subjects blesse,
And Grant the Gospell true and free,
amongst vs may encrease.
Betwixt each husband and each wife, 125
send loue and amitie,
And grant that I may be the last,
that such a death did dye.

[Finis]

Printed for F. Coules

LITERARY BALLADS AND ADAPTATIONS

ROBERT BURNS (1759-1796)

KELLYBURN BRAES

NOTE

Toward the end of the eighteenth century a widespread interest in the popular ballads led to their adaptation and imitation by numerous lyric poets. Among those which Burns adapted was the following version of "The Farmer's Curst Wife" (cf. page 228). The shrewish wife was Burns's favorite humorous character; compare his pictures of Tam O'Shanter's Kate (page 254) and Willie Wastle's witch-like spouse, described in the poem which bears his name. "Kellyburn Braes" was contributed to Johnson's *Museum of Scottish Song*, the first volume of which appeared in 1787.

There lived a carl in Kellyburn Braes,
Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi'
thyme;
And he had a wife was the plague o' his
days,
And the thyme it is withered, and rue
is in prime.

119. **she shriek'd.** In this line the hack-poet changes from first to third person; in the concluding stanza, however, he naïvely permits Mrs. Davis to utter the pious benediction and final warning.

Kellyburn Braes. 1. **carl**, old man. **Kellyburn Braes**, Kelly Burn, or brook, forms the northern boundary of Ayrshire; *brae* here is the slope of a hill. 2. **Hey**, etc. The refrain into which names of flowers were woven is a common ballad device.

Ae day as the carl gaed up the lang glen, 5
Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme;
He met wi' the Devil, says, "How do you fen?"
And the thyme it is withered, and rue is in prime.

"I've got a bad wife, sir; that's a' my complaint,"
Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme; 10
"For, saving your presence, to her ye're a saint,"
And the thyme it is withered, and rue is in prime.

"It's neither your stot nor your staig I shall crave,"
Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme;
"But gie me your wife, man, for her I must have," 15
And the thyme it is withered, and rue is in prime.

"O welcome most kindly!" the blythe carl said,
Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme;
"But if ye can match her ye're waur nor ye're ca'd,"
And the thyme it is withered, and rue is in prime. 20

The Devil has got the auld wife on his back,
Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme;
And, like a poor peddler, he's carried his pack,
And the thyme it is withered, and rue is in prime.

He's carried her hame to his ain hallan-door, 25
Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme;

7. **fen**, prosper. 13. **stot**, steer. **staig**, horse. 19. **waur**, worse. 25. **hallan-door**, the door in the partition which divides a Scotch cottage into a "but," or outside room, and the "ben," or inside room.

Syne bade her gae in for a bitch and a whore,
And the thyme it is withered, and rue is in prime.

Then straight he makes fifty, the pick o' his band,
Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme, 30
Turn out on her guard in the clap o' a hand,
And the thyme it is withered, and rue is in prime.

The carlin gaed through them like ony wud bear,
Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme;
Whae'er she gat hands on cam near her nae mair, 35
And the thyme it is withered, and rue is in prime.

A reekit wee devil looks over the wa',
Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme;
"O help, maister, help, or she'll ruin us a'!"
And the thyme it is withered, and rue is in prime; 40

The Devil he swore by the edge o' his knife,
Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme;
He pitied the man that was tied to a wife,
And the thyme it is withered, and rue is in prime.

The Devil he swore by the kirk and the bell, 45
Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme;
He was not in wedlock, thank Heav'n, but in hell,
And the thyme it is withered, and rue is in prime.

Then Satan has traveled again wi' his pack,
Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme;

27. **Syne**, then. 33. **carlin**, old woman. **wud**, angry. 37. **reekit**, smoky.

And to her auld husband he's carried her back, 51
And the thyme it is withered, and rue is in prime.

"I hae been a Devil the feck o' my life,"
Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme;
"But ne'er was in hell till I met wi' a wife," 55
And the thyme it is withered, and rue is in prime. (1792)

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH
(1770-1850)

LUCY GRAY; OR, SOLITUDE

NOTE

Wordsworth's theory of poetry, explained in the Preface to the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), page II-434, contains the conception that the truest poetry deals ordinarily with the emotional experiences of humble country people and is simple in structure. These items of his poetic creed made him peculiarly susceptible to the influence of the ballads, to which the work of Bishop Percy and others had given a wide popularity. The following story of the lost child was based, like many of Wordsworth's narrative poems, on an actual episode. The concluding stanzas, with their suggestion that Lucy's spirit still haunts the place, are thoroughly romantic. The influence of nature on Lucy, expressed particularly in the second and third stanzas, and the artistic simplicity of the whole narrative are characteristic of Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads*.

Oft I had heard of Lucy Gray—
And, when I crossed the wild,
I chanced to see at break of day
The solitary child.

No mate, no comrade Lucy knew; 5
She dwelt on a wide moor—
The sweetest thing that ever grew
Beside a human door!

You yet may spy the fawn at play,
The hare upon the green; 10
But the sweet face of Lucy Gray
Will never more be seen.

"Tonight will be a stormy night—
You to the town must go;
And take a lantern, child, to light 15
Your mother through the snow."

53. **feck**, the most part.

"That, father, will I gladly do.
'Tis scarcely afternoon—
The minster-clock has just struck two,
And yonder is the moon!" 20

At this the father raised his hook,
And snapped a fagot-band;
He plied his work—and Lucy took
The lantern in her hand.

Not blither is the mountain roe; 25
With many a wanton stroke
Her feet disperse the powdery snow,
That rises up like smoke.

The storm came on before its time;
She wandered up and down; 30
And many a hill did Lucy climb,
But never reached the town.

The wretched parents all that night
Went shouting far and wide;
But there was neither sound nor sight 35
To serve them for a guide.

At daybreak on a hill they stood
That overlooked the moor;
And thence they saw the bridge of wood
A furlong from their door. 40

They wept—and, turning homeward, cried,
"In heaven we all shall meet";
—When in the snow the mother spied
The print of Lucy's feet.

Then downward from the steep hill's edge
They tracked the footmarks small; 46
And through the broken hawthorn hedge,
And by the long stone wall;

And then an open field they crossed;
The marks were still the same. 50
They tracked them on, nor ever lost;
And to the bridge they came.

They followed from the snowy bank
Those footmarks, one by one,
Into the middle of the plank; 55
And further there were none!

—Yet some maintain that to this day
She is a living child,

That you may see sweet Lucy Gray
Upon the lonesome wild. 60

O'er rough and smooth she trips along,
And never looks behind;
And sings a solitary song
That whistles in the wind.

(1800)

ROBERT SOUTHEY (1774-1843)

THE INCHCAPE ROCK

Note

One element of the romantic movement in literature at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries was the return to medieval legend for literary material. The so-called Gothic romances, such as Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, Mrs. Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, and Mrs. Shelley's *Frankenstein*, are filled with haunted castles, robber barons, fat abbots, stolen damsels, horrible monsters, and fear-inspiring portents. This influence penetrated into poetry, and Southey yielded readily to it. The following narrative is based on a medieval legend, and is one of the least lurid of Southey's narrative poems. As in most of these poems the villain is represented as being punished for his impiety; cf. Bürger's "*Der Wilde Jäger.*"

No stir in the air, no stir in the sea,
The ship was still as she could be;
Her sails from heaven received no motion;
Her keel was steady in the ocean.

Without either sign or sound of their shock, 5
The waves flowed over the Inchcape Rock;
So little they rose, so little they fell,
They did not move the Inchcape Bell.

The Abbot of Aberbrothok
Had placed that Bell on the Inchcape Rock; 10
On a buoy in the storm it floated and swung,
And over the waves its warning rung.

When the Rock was hid by the surge's swell,
The mariners heard the warning Bell;
And then they knew the perilous Rock,
And blessed the Abbot of Aberbrothok.

The sun in heaven was shining gay, 17
All things were joyful on that day;
The sea-birds screamed as they wheeled round,
And there was joyance in their sound. 20

The buoy of the Inchcape Bell was seen,
A darker speck on the ocean green;
Sir Ralph the Rover walked his deck,
And he fixed his eye on the darker speck.

He felt the cheering power of spring; 25
It made him whistle, it made him sing.
His heart was mirthful to excess,
But the Rover's mirth was wickedness.

His eye was on the Inchcape float;
Quoth he, "My men put out the boat, 30
And row me to the Inchcape Rock,
And I'll plague the Abbot of Aberbrothok."

The boat is lowered, the boatmen row,
And to the Inchcape Rock they go;
Sir Ralph bent over from the boat, 35
And he cut the bell from the Inchcape float.

Down sunk the Bell with a gurgling sound;
The bubbles rose and burst around.
Quoth Sir Ralph, "The next who comes to the Rock
Won't bless the Abbot of Aberbrothok."

Sir Ralph the Rover sailed away; 41
He scoured the seas for many a day;
And now, grown rich with plundered store,
He steers his course for Scotland's shore.

So thick a haze o'erspreads the sky 45
They cannot see the sun on high.
The wind hath blown a gale all day;
At evening it hath died away.

On the deck the Rover takes his stand;
So dark it is they see no land. 50
Quoth Sir Ralph, "It will be lighter soon,
For there is the dawn of the rising moon."

6. **Inchcape Rock**, The Inchcape, or Bell, Rock is off the east coast of Scotland opposite The Firth of Tay. *Inch* is from the Gaelic word for "small island."

"Canst hear," said one, "the breakers roar?
For methinks we should be near the shore."
"Now where we are I cannot tell, 55
But I wish I could hear the Inchcape Bell."

They hear no sound; the swell is strong;
Though the wind hath fallen, they drift along,
Till the vessel strikes with a shivering shock.
"O Christ! it is the Inchcape Rock!" 60

Sir Ralph the Rover tore his hair;
He cursed himself in his despair.
The waves rush in on every side;
The ship is sinking beneath the tide.

But even in his dying fear, 65
One dreadful sound could the Rover hear—
A sound as if, with the Inchcape Bell,
The Devil below was ringing his knell.

(1802)

SIR WALTER SCOTT (1771-1832)

JOCK OF HAZELDEAN

NOTE

Sir Walter Scott was an indefatigable collector of popular ballads, riding on horseback in the border hills for days at a time to gather the old songs. Many of these appeared in his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802). The first stanza of the following ballad is identical, but for the proper name, with the corresponding stanza of "Jock of Hazelgreen," an old ballad which appears as No. 293 (E) in Child's monumental collection. Scott added the other stanzas and contributed the whole ballad to Campbell's *Albyn's Anthology*. The bride-stealing theme was common in the popular ballads and it was a great favorite with Scott; cf. for example, his "Lochinvar" (page 240) and "Robin Hood and Allin a Dale" (page 225).

"Why weep ye by the tide, ladie?
Why weep ye by the tide?
I'll wed ye to my youngest son,
And ye sall be his bride.

1. **tide**, time; the phrase means "at this time," or "now." 4. **sall**, shall.

And ye sall be his bride, ladie, 5
Sae comely to be seen"—
But aye she loot the tears down fa'
For Jock of Hazeldean.

"Now let this wilfu' grief be done,
And dry that cheek so pale; 10
Young Frank is chief of Errington
And lord of Langley-Dale;
His step is first in peaceful ha',
His sword in battle keen"—
But aye she loot the tears down fa' 15
For Jock of Hazeldean.

"A chain of gold ye sall not lack,
Nor braid to bind your hair;
Nor mettled hound, nor managed hawk,
Nor palfrey fresh and fair; 20
And you, the foremost o' them a',
Shall ride, our forest-queen"—
But aye she loot the tears down fa'
For Jock of Hazeldean.

The kirk was decked at morning-tide,
The tapers glimmered fair; 26
The priest and bridegroom wait the bride,
And dame and knight are there.
They sought her baith by bower and ha';
The ladie was not seen! 30
She's o'er the border and awa'
Wi' Jock of Hazeldean.

(1816)

MADGE WILDFIRE'S SONG

NOTE

The death song of the unhappy insane girl in *The Heart of Midlothian*. The song has much of the grim compactness of "The Twa Corbies" (page 210) and other popular ballads.

Proud Maisie is in the wood,
Walking so early;
Sweet Robin sits on the bush,
Singing so rarely.

"Tell me, thou bonny bird, 5
When shall I marry me?"
"When six braw gentlemen
Kirkward shall carry ye."

Madge Wildfire's Song. 7. **braw**, handsome. 8. **Kirkward**, churchward.

"Who makes the bridal bed,
Birdie, say truly?" 10
"The gray-headed sexton,
That delves the grave duly.

"The glow-worm o'er grave and stone
Shall light thee steady;
The owl from the steeple sing, 15
'Welcome, proud lady.'"

(1818)

LOCHINVAR

Note

The lively and popular ballad of young Lochinvar deals with the familiar subject of bride-stealing, the theme of "Robin Hood and Allin a Dale" and of Keats's "The Eve of St. Agnes." The picture of the bold lover carrying his bride away on horseback is one of the most familiar and romantic in narrative literature. Scott put the song into the mouth of the wily Lady Heron, who was entertaining James IV and his court at Holyrood Palace in Edinburgh just before the battle of Flodden Field in 1513 (see *Marmion*, Canto v, stanza xii). The places referred to are all in southern Scotland, on the English border.

Oh, young Lochinvar is come out of the west;
Through all the wide Border his steed was the best;
And save his good broadsword he weapons had none.
He rode all unarmed, and he rode all alone.
So faithful in love, and so dauntless in war, 5
There never was knight like the young Lochinvar.

He stayed not for brake, and he stopped not for stone;
He swam the Eske River where ford there was none;
But, ere he alighted at Netherby gate,
The bride had consented, the gallant came late; 10
For a laggard in love, and a dastard in war,
Was to wed the fair Ellen of brave Lochinvar.

So boldly he entered the Netherby hall,
'Mong bridesmen and kinsmen and brothers and all;
Then spoke the bride's father, his hand on his sword 15
(For the poor craven bridegroom said never a word),
"Oh, come ye in peace here, or come ye in war,
Or to dance at our bridal, young Lord Lochinvar?"

"I long wooed your daughter, my suit you denied—
Love swells like the Solway, but ebbs like its tide; 20
And now I am come, with this lost love of mine
To lead but one measure, drink one cup of wine.
There are maidens in Scotland more lovely by far
That would gladly be bride to the young Lochinvar."

The bride kissed the goblet; the knight took it up; 25
He quaffed off the wine, and he threw down the cup.
She looked down to blush, and she looked up to sigh,
With a smile on her lips and a tear in her eye.
He took her soft hand ere her mother could bar—
"Now tread we a measure!" said young Lochinvar. 30

So stately his form, and so lovely her face,
That never a hall such a galliard did grace;
While her mother did fret, and her father did fume,
And the bridegroom stood dangling his bonnet and plume;
And the bride-maidens whispered, "'Twere better by far 35
To have matched our fair cousin with young Lochinvar."

7. **brake**, thicket.

20. **Solway**, a firth of the Irish Sea between England and Scotland. 32. **galliard**, a brisk, old-fashioned dance.

One touch to her hand, and one word in her ear,
When they reached the hall door and the charger stood near;
So light to the croup the fair lady he swung,
So light to the saddle before her he sprung! 40
"She is won! we are gone, over bank, bush, and scar!
They'll have fleet steeds that follow!" quoth young Lochinvar.

There was mounting 'mong Graemes of the Netherby clan;
Forsters, Fenwicks, and Musgraves, they rode and they ran;
There was racing and chasing on Cannobie Lee; 45
But the lost bride of Netherby ne'er did they see.
So daring in love, and so dauntless in war,
Have ye e'er heard of gallant like young Lochinvar? (1808)

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW (1807-1882)

THE WRECK OF THE HESPERUS

NOTE

This entry in Longfellow's *Journal* for December 17, 1839, explains the origin of the poem:

"News of shipwrecks horrible on the coast. Twenty bodies washed ashore near Gloucester, one lashed to a piece of the wreck. There is a reef called Norman's Woe where many of these took place; among others the schooner *Hesperus*. Also the *Sea-flower* on Black Rock. I must write a ballad upon this."

On December 29 he wrote the ballad, which, he said, "hardly cost me an effort."

Longfellow has followed the conventional ballad meter, and there are traces also of various popular ballad devices. The sentimental rôle played by the skipper's blue-eyed daughter is, however, foreign to the popular ballad but in keeping with the child-hero motif widely disseminated in the nineteenth century by Dickens, Kingsley, Mrs. Hemans (in "Casabianca") and numerous others.

It was the schooner *Hesperus*,
That sailed the wintry sea;
And the skipper had taken his little daughtér,
To bear him company.

Blue were her eyes as the fairy-flax, 5
Her cheeks like the dawn of day,
And her bosom white as the hawthorn buds,
That ope in the month of May.

The skipper he stood beside the helm,
His pipe was in his mouth, 10
And he watched how the veering flaw did blow
The smoke now west, now south.

Then up and spake an old sailór,
Had sailed to the Spanish Main,
"I pray thee, put into yonder port, 15
For I fear a hurricane.

"Last night the moon had a golden ring,
And tonight no moon we see!"
The skipper, he blew a whiff from his pipe,
And a scornful laugh laughed he. 20

Colder and louder blew the wind,
A gale from the northeast,
The snow fell hissing in the brine,
And the billows frothed like yeast.

Down came the storm, and smote amain 25
The vessel in its strength;
She shuddered and paused, like a frightened steed,
Then leaped her cable's length.

"Come hither! come hither! my little daughtér,
And do not tremble so; 30
For I can weather the roughest gale
That ever wind did blow."

He wrapped her warm in his seaman's coat
Against the stinging blast;
He cut a rope from a broken spar, 35
And bound her to the mast.

"O father! I hear the church-bells ring,
Oh, say, what may it be?"
"'Tis the fog-bell on a rock-bound coast!"—
And he steered for the open sea. 40

39. **croup**, the horse's rump. 41. **scar**, a rocky cliff.

15. **I pray thee.** Cf. "Sir Patrick Spens," page 223, lines 23-32.

"O father! I hear the sound of guns,
Oh, say, what may it be?"
"Some ship in distress, that cannot live
In such an angry sea!"

"O father! I see a gleaming light, 45
Oh, say, what may it be?"
But the father answered never a word—
A frozen corpse was he.

Lashed to the helm, all stiff and stark,
With his face turned to the skies, 50
The lantern gleamed through the gleaming snow
On his fixed and glassy eyes.

Then the maiden clasped her hands and prayed
That savéd she might be;
And she thought of Christ, who stilled the wave, 55
On the Lake of Galilee.

And fast through the midnight dark and drear,
Through the whistling sleet and snow,
Like a sheeted ghost, the vessel swept
Tow'rd the reef of Norman's Woe.

And ever the fitful gusts between 61
A sound came from the land;
It was the sound of the trampling surf
On the rocks and the hard sea-sand.

The breakers were right beneath her bows; 65
She drifted a dreary wreck;
And a whooping billow swept the crew
Like icicles from her deck.

She struck where the white and fleecy waves
Looked soft as carded wool, 70
But the cruel rocks, they gored her side
Like the horns of an angry bull.

Her rattling shrouds, all sheathed in ice,
With the masts went by the board;
Like a vessel of glass, she stove and sank, 75
Ho! ho! the breakers roared!

At daybreak, on the bleak sea-beach,
A fisherman stood aghast,
To see the form of a maiden fair
Lashed close to a drifting mast. 80

The salt sea was frozen on her breast,
The salt tears in her eyes;
And he saw her hair, like the brown seaweed,
On the billows fall and rise.

Such was the wreck of the *Hesperus*, 85
In the midnight and the snow!
Christ save us all from a death like this,
On the reef of Norman's Woe!

(1840)

CHARLES KINGSLEY (1819-1875)

THE THREE FISHERS

NOTE

Charles Kingsley was an English clergyman and novelist who was interested, as were many Victorian writers, in the social conditions of the laboring classes. This interest is reflected in the following ballad with its suggestion of occupational hazards and sorrow among humble folk.

Three fishers went sailing away to the West,
Away to the West as the sun went down;
Each thought on the woman who loved him the best,
And the children stood watching them out of the town;
For men must work, and women must weep, 5
And there's little to earn, and many to keep,
Though the harbor bar be moaning.

Three wives sat up in the lighthouse tower,
And they trimmed the lamps as the sun went down;
They looked at the squall, and they looked at the shower, 10
And the night-rack came rolling up ragged and brown.
But men must work, and women must weep,
Though storms be sudden, and waters deep,
And the harbor bar be moaning.

Three corpses lay out on the shining sands 15
In the morning gleam as the tide went down,
And the women are weeping and wringing their hands
For those who will never come home to the town;
For men must work, and women must weep,
And the sooner it's over, the sooner to sleep; 20
And good-by to the bar and its moaning. (1851)

THE SANDS OF DEE

Note

With this ballad of the child lost while engaged in a humble home duty compare Wordsworth's "Lucy Gray" (page 237). The device of having the voice of the lost child still haunt the river flats appears frequently in ballads of art. Lines 13-19 should be compared with lines 36-43 of "The Twa Sisters" (page 211). The ballad appeared originally in Kingsley's novel, *Alton Locke*.

"O Mary, go and call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home
Across the sands of Dee."
The western wind was wild and dank with foam, 5
And all alone went she.

The western tide crept up along the sand,
And o'er and o'er the sand,
And round and round the sand,
As far as eye could see. 10
The rolling mist came down and hid the land;
And never home came she.

"Oh! is it weed, or fish, or floating hair—
A tress of golden hair,
A drowned maiden's hair 15
Above the nets at sea?
Was never salmon yet that shone so fair
Among the stakes on Dee."

They rowed her in across the rolling foam,
The cruel crawling foam, 20
The cruel hungry foam,
To her grave beside the sea;
But still the boatmen hear her call the cattle home
Across the sands of Dee. (1849)

THOMAS HOOD (1799-1845)

FAITHLESS NELLY GRAY

A PATHETIC BALLAD

Note

Thomas Hood is known best by his two pathetic poems, "The Song of the Shirt" (page 476) and "The Bridge of Sighs" (page 477), but he also wrote numerous rollicking humorous poems, of which the following parody of a suicide-for-love ballad is a characteristic example. Hood was an inveterate punster, twisting his whimsical way from one pun to another. His "Faithless Sally Brown" deals with the love affairs of a sailor, as the following parody does with those of a soldier.

Ben Battle was a soldier bold,
And used to war's alarms;
But a cannon-ball took off his legs,
So he laid down his arms!

Now as they bore him off the field, 5
Said he, "Let others shoot,
For here I leave my second leg,
And the Forty-second Foot!"

The army-surgeons made him limbs.
Said he, "They're only pegs; 10
But there's as wooden members quite
As represent my legs!"

Now Ben he loved a pretty maid,
Her name was Nelly Gray;
So he went to pay her his devours 15
When he devoured his pay!

But when he called on Nelly Gray,
She made him quite a scoff;
And when she saw his wooden legs,
Began to take them off! 20

"O Nelly Gray! O Nelly Gray!
Is this your love so warm?

The love that loves a scarlet coat
  Should be more uniform!"

Said she, "I loved a soldier once, 25
  For he was blithe and brave;
But I will never have a man
  With both legs in the grave!

"Before you had those timber toes,
  Your love I did allow, 30
But then, you know, you stand upon
  Another footing now!"

"O Nelly Gray! O Nelly Gray!
  For all your jeering speeches,
At duty's call, I left my legs 35
  In Badajos's *breaches*!"

"Why, then," said she, "you've lost the feet
  Of legs in war's alarms,
And now you cannot wear your shoes
  Upon your feats of arms!" 40

"O false and fickle Nelly Gray;
  I know why you refuse—
Though I've no feet—some other man
  Is standing in my shoes!

"I wish I ne'er had seen your face; 45
  But, now, a long farewell!
For you will be my death—alas!
  You will not be my *Nell!*"

Now when he went from Nelly Gray,
  His heart so heavy got— 50
And life was such a burthen grown,
  It made him take a knot!

So round his melancholy neck,
  A rope he did entwine,
And, for his second time in life, 55
  Enlisted in the Line!

One end he tied around a beam,
  And then removed his pegs,
And, as his legs were off—of course,
  He soon was off his legs! 60

And there he hung, till he was dead
  As any nail in town—

36. **Badajos.** Badajoz, in Spain, was captured by Wellington in the Peninsular War, April 6, 1812.

For though distress had cut him up,
  It could not cut him down!

A dozen men sat on his corpse, 65
  To find out why he died—
And they buried Ben in four crossroads,
  With a *stake* in his inside!

(1829)

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES
(1809-1894)

THE SPECTER PIG

NOTE

The following parody on the return-of-the-dead theme appeared among *Verses from the Oldest Portfolio*, which contains many of the American humorist's juvenile productions. "'The Specter Pig,'" he wrote by way of introduction, "was a wicked suggestion which came into my head after reading Dana's 'Buccaneer.' Nobody seemed to find it out, and I never mentioned it to the venerable poet, who might not have been pleased with the parody." Richard Henry Dana (1787-1879) was a minor American poet, whose "Buccaneer" appeared in 1833. "The Specter Pig" should be compared not only with Dana's poem but also with "Sweet William's Ghost" (page 216), Bürger's "Leonore," and other ballads dealing seriously with this theme. In Holmes's parody the simplicity, awesomeness, and morality of the genuine ballads are, of course, reduced to absurdity.

It was the stalwart butcher man,
  That knit his swarthy brow,
And said the gentle Pig must die,
  And sealed it with a vow.

And, oh! it was the gentle Pig 5
  Lay stretched upon the ground,
And ah! it was the cruel knife
  His little heart that found.

They took him then, those wicked men,
  They trailed him all along; 10
They put a stick between his lips,
  And through his heels a thong;

And round and round an oaken beam
  A hempen cord they flung,
And, like a mighty pendulum, 15
  All solemnly he swung!

67. **crossroads.** A suicide was buried at a road-crossing with a stake driven through his body to keep the accursed ghost from walking. Having killed himself, he might not be buried on holy ground within the churchyard.

Now say thy prayers, thou sinful man,
And think what thou hast done,
And read thy catechism well,
Thou bloody-minded one; 20

For if his sprite should walk by night,
It better were for thee
That thou wert moldering in the ground,
Or bleaching in the sea.

It was the savage butcher then 25
That made a mock of sin,
And swore a very wicked oath,
He did not care a pin.

It was the butcher's youngest son—
His voice was broke with sighs, 30
And with his pocket-handkerchief
He wiped his little eyes;

All young and ignorant was he,
But innocent and mild,
And, in his soft simplicity, 35
Out spoke the tender child:

"O father, father, list to me;
The Pig is deadly sick,
And men have hung him by his heels,
And fed him with a stick." 40

It was the bloody butcher then,
That laughed as he would die,
Yet did he soothe the sorrowing child,
And bid him not to cry:

"O Nathan, Nathan, what's a pig, 45
That thou shouldst weep and wail?
Come, bear thee like a butcher's child,
And thou shalt have his tail!"

It was the butcher's daughter then,
So slender and so fair, 50
That sobbed as if her heart would break,
And tore her yellow hair;

And thus she spoke in thrilling tone,
Fast fell the tear-drops big:
"Ah! woe is me! Alas! Alas! 55
The Pig! The Pig! The Pig!"

Then did her wicked father's lips
Make merry with her woe,
And call her many a naughty name,
Because she whimpered so. 60

Ye need not weep, ye gentle ones;
In vain your tears are shed;
Ye cannot wash his crimson hand,
Ye cannot soothe the dead.

The bright sun folded on his breast 65
His robes of rosy flame,
And softly over all the west
The shades of evening came.

He slept, and troops of murdered pigs
Were busy with his dreams; 70
Loud rang their wild, unearthly shrieks,
Wide yawned their mortal seams.

The clock struck twelve; the Dead hath heard;
He opened both his eyes,
And sullenly he shook his tail 75
To lash the feeding flies.

One quiver of the hempen cord—
One struggle and one bound—
With stiffened limb and leaden eye,
The Pig was on the ground! 80

And straight toward the sleeper's house
His fearful way he wended;
And hooting owl and hovering bat
On midnight wing attended.

Back flew the bolt, up rose the latch,
And open swung the door, 86
And little mincing feet were heard
Pat, pat along the floor.

Two hoofs upon the sanded floor,
And two upon the bed; 90
And they are breathing side by side,
The living and the dead!

"Now wake, now wake, thou butcher man!
What makes thy cheek so pale?
Take hold! take hold! thou dost not fear
To clasp a specter's tail?" 96

Untwisted every winding coil;
The shuddering wretch took hold—
All like an icicle it seemed,
So tapering and so cold. 100

"Thou com'st with me, thou butcher man!"—
He strives to loose his grasp,

But faster than the clinging vine,
  Those twining spirals clasp;

And open, open swung the door, 105
  And, fleeter than the wind,
The shadowy specter swept before—
  The butcher trailed behind.

Fast fled the darkness of the night,
  And morn rose faint and dim; 110
They called full loud, they knocked full long,
  They did not waken him.

Straight, straight toward that oaken beam,
  A trampled pathway ran;
A ghastly shape was swinging there—115
  It was the butcher man.

(AFTER 1827)

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CHAPTER IV

MODERN NARRATIVE POETRY

AN INTRODUCTION

I. The Spirit of the Nineteenth Century

Until the beginning of the nineteenth century English literature expressed itself in the main through the medium of certain sharply distinguished literary types—narrative and lyric poetry, the essay, history, biography, the novel and the drama—whose characteristics were well known alike by writers and by the reading public. A traditional sense of form militated persistently against any mixture of types, though variety within the type might be considerable. The development of modern narrative poetry does not lie in this period, but in the one which succeeded it. The peaceful English political and intellectual world of 1780, which was so sure of its values, was rudely disturbed by political, philosophical, and industrial forces long at work, which culminated on the Continent in the French Revolution and Napoleon, and in England in the Industrial Revolution with its resulting social and governmental reforms. Once again the value of the individual to society was affirmed, but in new terms. The rights of man, especially of the laborer, were forced upon the attention of land-holding Englishmen because the laborer became the manipulator of the natural forces harnessed in the factory system. The new problems brought with them a new attitude toward life. Hitherto men had been able to make a general intellectual survey of human knowledge, or to perform all the steps in the manufacture of any commercial article; but with the increasing complexity of civilization this was no longer possible, and the specialist and the skilled workman succeeded the general, unskilled laborer. The result was mass production of economic utilities, an enormous advance in quantity, and in some fields an ability to construct machines never before brought within the reach of man, such as the steam engine. But in many cases there was a corresponding loss in the finish of the individual product which had formerly been effected by the pride of the laborer in his work. On the whole, however, this loss was made up by the general economic advance, and by the new and broader outlook upon life.

The French and the Industrial Revolutions released the pent-up imagination of English poetry, and a new literary cycle began, which was characterized in narrative poetry by an immediate development of individualism in thought and form. In many ways it was veritably a literary revolution. No longer were the old literary types considered sacrosanct, but each poet felt at liberty, not merely to alter the type to suit his needs, but to borrow characteristics from other types, until it is often difficult to say that a certain poem is clearly narrative, lyric, or dramatic.

II. The Imaginative and Realistic Trend in Modern Narrative Poetry

Consequently we can group the narrative poets of the nineteenth century better by their attitude toward life and by their subject-matter than by the forms they used. One group felt that their imagination was aroused by the unusual in life, which was found best in the mythology, folklore, and sagas of the heroic and medieval ages; another group felt that their imagination was aroused most by the events of everyday life. The former group could not move at ease in the realm of contemporary reality; the latter could. To the first group, on the whole, belong Scott, Coleridge, Keats, Rossetti, Tennyson, William Morris, and Swinburne; to the second group, on the whole, belong Cowper, Burns, Wordsworth, Brown-

ing, Meredith, Masefield, Hardy, and Gibson.

In the first and more romantic group Scott found the material he wished in the medieval romances and border ballads of England and Scotland, and his success is chiefly responsible for the popularity of the long narrative poem in the nineteenth century. Because of the lack of space Scott can be represented here only by a short, early narrative poem. Coleridge sought for the elements of surprise and wonder in the supernatural, and emphasized it in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and *Christabel*. Keats hovered between such conscious imitations of the medieval narrative and ballad poetry as "The Eve of St. Agnes" and "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," and a more free expression of his yearning for beauty in the mythological narrative *Endymion*, in which the plot is subordinated to the aesthetic fancies of the poet's imagination. Rossetti is a disciple half of Scott and half of Coleridge, although his professed determination was to recapture the spirit of literature and painting as illustrated in the early periods of Renaissance art. However, he is peculiarly individual in the element of mysticism with which all his work is cloaked, whether poetry or painting. Tennyson, though he loved the classical and medieval past for itself, yet made it chiefly the embodiment of the ideals which dominated the Victorian Age, with an increasingly elegiac tone of regret that the new forces seemed to be exterminating an appreciation of former realms of poetic beauty. William Morris, like Rossetti a creator in the fine arts as well as in poetry, loved beauty for its own sake, and in literature expressed it best in narratives imitative of the treasures of classical and medieval tradition. *The Life and Death of Jason*, *Sigurd the Volsung*, and *The Earthly Paradise* combine well-told stories with vivid descriptions and with an intense feeling for beauty, which Swinburne over-elaborated in the luscious versification of *Tristram in Lyonesse*, a versification which tended to suppress the element of action.

In the second and more realistic group Wordsworth desired to express in simple language the inner significance of the events of everyday life. His beliefs are expressed in the *Preface* to the *Lyrical Ballads*, reprinted in this text (page II-434). Wordsworth was the first English poet to write a considerable body of frankly significant autobiographical poetry which might be classed as narrative. But at once we are faced with the breakdown of the narrative type, for while *The Prelude* or even "Tintern Abbey" tells a story, the main emphasis is upon the emotions roused by the incident and reflections upon it, and we are therefore in debatable territory between lyric and narrative poetry. With Browning the difficulty is increased, for while no English poet has more ardently revealed the fundamental characteristics of human nature, yet because of his interest in history and fine arts, he depicted everyday life in the past rather than in the present. Nevertheless, Browning made Fra Lippo Lippi and Andrea Del Sarto as real to us as Bishop Blougram or James Lee's Wife, and in their lives he reveals experiences which are understood by all of us. Browning, in his search for the universal truth in the particular incident, developed a poetic technique which fused various types of poetry into one. Originally, his narratives were told in the third person, then in the first; but as neither form seemed sufficiently vivid, Browning developed, after many experiments, a type known as the dramatic monologue, in which the narrator combined the story, its setting, and his own emotions. To what type of poetry these monologues belong is questionable. Certainly they tell a story, but not for the sake of the story as much as for the dramatic emotion dominating the narrator at the moment, since generally the narrator is the principal actor. Dramas they are not, for only one person speaks, and there is no external action. They are frequently lyric in form and emotion, but there is a story besides. It is impossible then to assign such poems definitely to any specific type of poetry, but as they arose from a narrative impulse they are considered here as narrative. The same statements apply to much of the work of the English poets Hardy and Meredith, and of the American poets Amy Lowell, E. A. Robinson, and E. L. Masters. The *Satires of Circumstance*, *Modern Love*, *Men, Women and Ghosts*, *The Man against the Sky*, and *Spoon River Anthology* confessedly use

forms once lyric to express either the facts of a story or its emotional distillation. If the emotional distillation overbalances the story, one is tempted to designate the poem as lyric; if the story predominates, as narrative; if a character sketch is the result, where shall it be placed? The decision becomes a matter of personal opinion, and while much of Hardy's poetry is rather clearly on the narrative side, even as much of Meredith's is lyric, Amy Lowell, E. A. Robinson, and E. L. Masters partake equally of both types with something of the dramatic added. Although an interpretation of free verse will be given in the essay on the lyric, we may say at this juncture that the free, yet subtle, rhythm of free verse has been of great aid to Fletcher, "H. D.," Amy Lowell, Lindsay, Masters, Robinson, and Sandburg in attaining striking effects in both their lyric and narrative poetry. Noyes, on the other hand, who is generally a lyric poet, has written many successful romantic narratives of varying length in more traditional lyric meters. "The Highwayman" is a re-creation in narrative poetry of the age of romance, but it is balanced in lyric poetry by "The Barrel Organ" (page 629), which is as an evocation of romance from contemporary realism. Masefield, however, has composed straight narrative poetry upon subjects taken from contemporary life, but out of these he has created structures not merely realistic, but as romantic as the work of the members of the first group. *Dauber*, *The Daffodil Fields*, *The Widow in the Bye Street*, and many of his shorter narratives show that grim fact and romance are perhaps merely different aspects of the same thing.

We remarked in the first section of the introductory essay on the epic that while in modern narrative poetry poets had experimented with elaborate metrical forms, they had found, on the whole, that a simple metrical vehicle was preferable for the presentation of a narrative in verse. On the other hand, the simple verse forms of modern narrative poetry manifest remarkable modulation and subtlety. Of the meter of *Christabel* (1816) Coleridge said, " . . . the meter of the *Christabel* is not, properly speaking, irregular, though it may seem so from its being founded on a new principle: namely, that of counting in each line the accents, not the syllables. Though the latter may vary from seven to twelve, yet in each line the accents will be found to be only four. Nevertheless this occasional variation in number of syllables is not introduced wantonly, or for the mere ends of convenience, but in correspondence with some transition in the nature of the imagery or passion." The last sentence symbolizes the attitude of many modern poets toward their art. For most of them there may be variation within limits, though for some the limits are so elastic as to be almost nonexistent. In modern narrative poetry the subtle modulation of simple meter appears characteristically in *Christabel* and in the dramatic monologues of Browning, where the iambic pentameter becomes susceptible of almost infinite variation. Now while many poets have followed Browning in this direction—in England Hardy, Sassoon, Gibson, and Symons, in America Frost, Markham, Moody, and Robinson—yet a new development has appeared in free verse. Whether the poets of free verse would acknowledge *Christabel* as a forerunner is doubtful, for *Christabel* uses a fixed number of stresses in each line, while free verse varies the stresses infinitely to meet the promptings of the emotion of the moment. Yet they would, perhaps, acknowledge the last sentence of Coleridge quoted above as an indication of their purpose, for free verse seeks in subtle metrical modulation to express the equally subtle pulsations of life. Now while a discussion of this movement falls best in the section of this book which is devoted to the lyric, we ought again to acknowledge here that the general poetic achievement in free verse of Whitman, "H. D.," Fletcher, and Sandburg, and the specific achievement in narrative poetry of E. L. Masters and Amy Lowell have enlarged the realm of poetic expression. Though in narrative poetry Masters has not pushed so far afield as did Amy Lowell in the polyphonic prose of *Can Grande's Castle*, both have proved in such poems as are included here that free verse has a distinct place in narrative poetry, especially in the realm of the monologue. As we have said before, it is uncertain whether the lack of a well-marked and recurrent meter will make free

verse a successful medium for a long narrative poem, but for certain varieties of the modern narrative poem free verse is perfectly adequate.

In that period of literature which we denote as modern, narrative poetry has shown itself able to express the spirit of its age even as epic poetry and medieval narrative poetry did for their respective ages. It has been even more versatile than they, for while the popular epic and medieval narrative have developed few varieties, modern narrative poetry has assumed many forms and has not scrupled to borrow whenever necessary from other literary types, such as the lyric and the drama. In the space at our disposal it is impossible to give examples of every stage in the development, and every variation. Neither is it intended even to mention all the outstanding narrative poets of today in England and America. Representative poets have been chosen, and enough examples of modern narrative poetry have been provided, it is hoped, to prove that narrative poetry today is as vital in embodying the spirit of its age as it was in the days of *Beowulf*, and that it is today a much more versatile form than it has ever been before in English and American literature.

CHAPTER IV

SELECTIONS

WILLIAM COWPER (1731-1800)

THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN

SHOWING HOW HE WENT FARTHER THAN HE INTENDED, AND CAME HOME SAFE AGAIN

NOTE

"The Diverting History of John Gilpin" is a simple, conventional narrative of delightful humor, and serves as an excellent manifestation of what was popular in English narrative poetry just prior to the Romantic Movement. The incident upon which the poem is based was related to Cowper one evening by Lady Austen, and the poet was so amused by it that he immediately transferred his impressions to verse. Notice the conventional ballad form, the emphasis upon the external action of the story, the humor, the solid domestic virtues which are incidentally extolled, and the absence of the personal point of view of the poet, with the exception of the last stanza.

John Gilpin was a citizen
  Of credit and renown;
A trainband captain eke was he
  Of famous London town.

John Gilpin's spouse said to her dear, 5
  "Though wedded we have been
These twice ten tedious years, yet we
  No holiday have seen.

"Tomorrow is our wedding day,
  And we will then repair 10
Unto the Bell at Edmonton
  All in a chaise and pair.

"My sister, and my sister's child,
  Myself, and children three,
Will fill the chaise; so you must ride 15
  On horseback after we."

He soon replied, "I do admire
  Of womankind but one,
And you are she, my dearest dear;
  Therefore it shall be done. 20

"I am a linendraper bold,
  As all the world doth know,
And my good friend the calender
  Will lend his horse to go."

Quoth Mrs. Gilpin, "That's well said; 25
  And for that wine is dear,
We will be furnished with our own,
  Which is both bright and clear."

John Gilpin kissed his loving wife;
  O'erjoyed was he to find, 30
That, though on pleasure she was bent,
  She had a frugal mind.

The morning came, the chaise was brought,
  But yet was not allowed
To drive up to the door, lest all 35
  Should say that she was proud.

So three doors off the chaise was stayed,
  Where they did all get in;
Six precious souls, and all agog
  To dash through thick and thin. 40

Smack went the whip, round went the wheels,
  Were never folks so glad;
The stones did rattle underneath,
  As if Cheapside were mad.

John Gilpin at his horse's side 45
  Seized fast the flowing mane,
And up he got, in haste to ride,
  But soon came down again;

3. **trainband.** The trainbands or trained bands of citizens were militia. 11. **Edmonton,** a lovely old village in the valley of the River Lea, about seven miles north of London. Here Cowper lived for some time.

21. **linendraper,** a retail seller of linens. 23. **calender,** a presser of cloth. 44. **Cheapside,** one of the chief business streets of ancient London, running roughly due east from the north end of St. Paul's church to the Royal Exchange.

For saddletree scarce reached had he
His journey to begin, 50
When, turning round his head, he saw
Three customers come in.

So down he came; for loss of time,
Although it grieved him sore,
Yet loss of pence, full well he knew, 55
Would trouble him much more.

'Twas long before the customers
Were suited to their mind,
When Betty screaming came down-stairs,
"The wine is left behind!" 60

"Good lack!" quoth he—"yet bring it me,
My leathern belt likewise,
In which I bear my trusty sword
When I do exercise."

Now Mistress Gilpin (careful soul!) 65
Had two stone bottles found,
To hold the liquor that she loved,
And keep it safe and sound.

Each bottle had a curling ear,
Through which the belt he drew, 70
And hung a bottle on each side,
To make his balance true.

Then over all, that he might be
Equipped from top to toe,
His long red cloak, well brushed and neat, 75
He manfully did throw.

Now see him mounted once again
Upon his nimble steed,
Full slowly pacing o'er the stones,
With caution and good heed. 80

But finding soon a smoother road
Beneath his well-shod feet,
The snorting beast began to trot,
Which galled him in his seat.

So, "Fair and softly," John he cried, 85
But John he cried in vain;
That trot became a gallop soon,
In spite of curb and rein.

So stooping down, as needs he must
Who cannot sit upright, 90
He grasped the mane with both his hands,
And eke with all his might.

His horse, who never in that sort
Had handled been before,
What thing upon his back had got 95
Did wonder more and more.

Away went Gilpin, neck or nought;
Away went hat and wig;
He little dreamt, when he set out,
Of running such a rig. 100

The wind did blow, the cloak did fly,
Like streamer long and gay,
Till, loop and button failing both,
At last it flew away.

Then might all people well discern 105
The bottles he had slung;
A bottle swinging at each side,
As hath been said or sung.

The dogs did bark, the children screamed,
Up flew the windows all; 110
And every soul cried out, "Well done!"
As loud as he could bawl.

Away went Gilpin—who but he?
His fame soon spread around—
"He carries weight! he rides a race! 115
'Tis for a thousand pound!"

And still as fast as he drew near,
'Twas wonderful to view
How in a trice the turnpike men
Their gates wide open threw. 120

And now, as he went bowing down,
His reeking head full low,
The bottles twain behind his back
Were shattered at a blow.

Down ran the wine into the road, 125
Most piteous to be seen,
Which made his horse's flanks to smoke
As they had basted been.

115. **He carries weight.** In racing, the lighter jockeys carried enough weight to equalize the weight of all the contestants. 119. **turnpike**, tollgate. 128. **basted**, wet, as with liquid from the dripping-pan when roasts are moistened to keep them from burning.

But still he seemed to carry weight,
With leathern girdle braced; 130
For all might see the bottle necks
Still dangling at his waist.

Thus all through merry Islington
These gambols did he play,
Until he came unto the Wash 135
Of Edmonton so gay;

And there he threw the Wash about
On both sides of the way,
Just like unto a trundling mop,
Or a wild goose at play. 140

At Edmonton his loving wife
From the balcony spied
Her tender husband, wondering much
To see how he did ride.

"Stop, stop, John Gilpin!—Here's the house," 145
They all at once did cry;
"The dinner waits, and we are tired."
Said Gilpin—"So am I!"

But yet his horse was not a whit
Inclined to tarry there; 150
For why?—his owner had a house
Full ten miles off, at Ware.

So like an arrow swift he flew,
Shot by an archer strong;
So did he fly—which brings me to 155
The middle of my song.

Away went Gilpin out of breath,
And sore against his will,
Till at his friend the calender's
His horse at last stood still. 160

The calender, amazed to see
His neighbor in such trim,
Laid down his pipe, flew to the gate,
And thus accosted him:

"What news? what news? your tidings tell; 165
Tell me you must and shall—
Say why bareheaded you are come,
Or why you come at all?"

Now Gilpin had a pleasant wit,
And loved a timely joke; 170
And thus unto the calender
In merry guise he spoke:

"I came because your horse would come;
And, if I well forbode,
My hat and wig will soon be here— 175
They are upon the road."

The calender, right glad to find
His friend in merry pin,
Returned him not a single word,
But to the house went in; 180

Whence straight he came with hat and wig—
A wig that flowed behind,
A hat not much the worse for wear,
Each comely in its kind.

He held them up, and in his turn 185
Thus showed his ready wit:
"My head is twice as big as yours,
They therefore needs must fit.

"But let me scrape the dirt away
That hangs upon your face; 190
And stop and eat, for well you may
Be in a hungry case."

Said John, "It is my wedding day,
And all the world would stare,
If wife should dine at Edmonton, 195
And I should dine at Ware."

So turning to his horse, he said,
"I am in haste to dine;
'Twas for your pleasure you came here,
You shall go back for mine." 200

Ah luckless speech, and bootless boast!
For which he paid full dear;
For, while he spake, a braying ass
Did sing most loud and clear;

Whereat his horse did snort, as he 205
Had heard a lion roar,
And galloped off with all his might,
As he had done before.

133. **Islington**, one of the northern metropolitan boroughs of London, where the citizens used to go for pastime on Sundays and holidays. Gilpin rode north from Cheapside through Islington to reach Edmonton. 135. **Wash**, a stretch of water near Edmonton. 139. **trundling**, twirling. 152. **Ware**, a town twenty-two miles north of London in the valley of the River Lea.

178. **pin**, humor.

Away went Gilpin, and away
  Went Gilpin's hat and wig; 210
He lost them sooner than at first,
  For why?—they were too big.

Now Mistress Gilpin, when she saw
  Her husband posting down
Into the country far away, 215
  She pulled out half-a-crown;

And thus unto the youth she said,
  That drove them to the Bell,
"This shall be yours, when you bring back
  My husband safe and well." 220

The youth did ride, and soon did meet
  John coming back amain;
Whom in a trice he tried to stop,
  By catching at his rein.

But not performing what he meant, 225
  And gladly would have done,
The frighted steed he frighted more,
  And made him faster run.

Away went Gilpin, and away
  Went postboy at his heels, 230
The postboy's horse right glad to miss
  The lumbering of the wheels.

Six gentlemen upon the road,
  Thus seeing Gilpin fly,
With postboy scampering in the rear,
  They raised the hue and cry: 236

"Stop thief! stop thief! a highwayman!"
  Not one of them was mute;
And all and each that passed that way
  Did join in the pursuit. 240

And now the turnpike gates again
  Flew open in short space,
The toll-men thinking as before,
  That Gilpin rode a race.

And so he did, and won it too, 245
  For he got first to town,
Nor stopped till where he had got up
  He did again get down.

Now let us sing, "Long live the king,
  And Gilpin, long live he"; 250
And when he next doth ride abroad,
  May I be there to see! (1785)

ROBERT BURNS (1759-1796)

TAM O' SHANTER

NOTE

The story of Tam O'Shanter, which was an old folk-tale of Burns's natal village, was a most natural subject for him to treat. But in telling the story Burns drops the purely objective manner and invades the scene, adding to the humor by his delightful comments. The change is significant. The story is still told for its own sake, but the individuality of the poet begins to dominate it. The attitude of Burns toward the supernatural is lighter and less serious than that of earlier poets. For Burns superstition has begun to become humorous.

When chapman billies leave the street,
And drouthy neebors neebors meet;
As market-days are wearing late,
An' folk begin to tak the gate;
While we sit bousing at the nappy, 5
An' getting fou and unco happy,
We think na on the lang Scots miles,
The mosses, waters, slaps, and styles,
That lie between us and our hame,
Whare sits our sulky, sullen dame, 10
Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

This truth fand honest Tam O' Shanter,
As he frae Ayr ae night did canter
(Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses,
For honest men and bonie lasses). 16

O Tam! hadst thou but been sae wise,
As taen thy ain wife Kate's advice!
She tauld thee weel thou was a skellum,
A blethering, blustering, drunken blellum; 20
That frae November till October,
Ae market-day thou was nae sober;
That ilka melder wi' the miller,

Title. **Shanter.** Shanter is the name of a farm near Kirkoswald in southern Ayrshire. Burns had learned surveying in the neighborhood when a boy of seventeen. 1. **chapman billies,** peddler fellows. 2. **drouthy,** thirsty. 4. **tak the gate,** take the road for home. 5. **nappy,** a very strong brand of Scotch ale. 6. **fou,** full. **unco,** very. 7. **lang Scots miles.** The Scotch mile was 216 yards longer than the English mile. 8. **slaps, and styles,** gaps, and steps over the fence or wall. 14. **Ayr,** the village near which Burns was born. 19. **skellum,** rascal. 20. **blethering,** stupid, foolish. **blellum,** over-talkative person. 22. **Ae,** one. 23. **ilka,** every. **melder,** a quantity of grain put through the mill in one grinding.

Thou sat as lang as thou had siller;
That ev'ry naig was ca'd a shoe on, 25
The smith an thee gat roaring fou on;
That at the Lord's house, ev'n on Sunday,
Thou drank wi' Kirkton Jean till Monday.
She prophesied that, late or soon,
Thou would be found deep drowned in Doon, 30
Or catched wi' warlocks in the mirk,
By Alloway's auld haunted kirk.

Ah, gentle dames! it gars me greet,
To think how mony counsels sweet,
How mony lengthened, sage advices, 35
The husband frae the wife despises!

But to our tale: Ae market night,
Tam had got planted unco right,
Fast by an ingle, bleezing finely,
Wi' reaming swats that drank divinely;
And at his elbow, Souter Johnny, 41
His ancient, trusty, drouthy crony—
Tam lo'ed him like a very brither;
They had been fou for weeks thegither.
The night drave on wi' sangs and clatter,
And aye the ale was growing better; 46
The landlady and Tam grew gracious,
Wi' favors secret, sweet, and precious;
The souter tauld his queerest stories;
The landlord's laugh was ready chorus.
The storm without might rair and rustle,
Tam did na mind the storm a whistle. 52

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
E'en drowned himsel amang the nappy.
As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,
The minutes winged their way wi' pleasure; 56
Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious!

But pleasures are like poppies spread—
You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed; 60

25. **That ev'ry naig was ca'd**, etc., that every time a horse was shod. 28. **Kirkton**, a distinctive name for any Scotch village where a parish church is located. Jean Kennedy, who is here alluded to, ran a public house in Kirkoswald. 30. **Doon**, the river which runs through Ayr. 31. **warlocks**, magicians, wizards. Cf. the descriptions of Grendel and his mother in *Beowulf* (page 29). 33. **gars me greet**, makes me weep. 39. **ingle**, hearth, fire. 40. **reaming swats**, creamy new ale. 41. **Souter**, cobbler. 51. **rair**, roar. 53 ff. **Care**, etc. These passages are in amusing contrast to the traditional attitude of the English toward life and fate. Yet even with Tam fate plays a part.

Or like the snow falls in the river,
A moment white—then melts forever;
Or like the borealis race,
That flit ere you can point their place;
Or like the rainbow's lovely form, 65
Evanishing amid the storm.—
Nae man can tether time nor tide;
The hour approaches Tam maun ride;
That hour, o' night's black arch the keystane,
That dreary hour he mounts his beast in;
And sic a night he taks the road in, 71
As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.

The wind blew as 'twad blawn its last;
The rattling show'rs rose on the blast;
The speedy gleams the darkness swallowed; 75
Loud, deep, and lang the thunder bellowed;
That night, a child might understand,
The Deil had business on his hand.

Weel mounted on his gray mare Meg—
A better never lifted leg— 80
Tam skelpit on thro' dub and mire,
Despising wind, and rain, and fire;
Whyles holding fast his guid blue bonnet,
Whyles crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet,
Whyles glow'ring round wi' prudent cares, 85
Lest bogles catch him unawares—
Kirk-Alloway was drawing nigh,
Whare ghaists and houlets nightly cry.

By this time he was cross the ford,
Whare in the snaw the chapman smoored; 90
And past the birks and meikle stane,
Whare drunken Charlie brak's neckbane;
And through the whins, and by the cairn,
Whare hunters fand the murdered bairn;
And near the thorn, aboon the well, 95

67. **tide**, season, moment. 68. **maun**, must. 69. **That hour.** At midnight witches were supposed to attain their greatest power. Geraldine's first appearance in *Christabel* is at midnight. 81. **skelpit**, splashed. **dub**, puddle. 84. **sonnet**, song. 85. **glow'ring**, staring 86. **bogles**, hobgoblins. 88. **houlets**, owlets. 90. **smoored**, smothered. 91. **birks**, birches. **meikle**, great. 92. **brak's neckbane**, broke his neck. 93. **whins**, furze bushes. **cairn**, pile of stones. 94. **bairn**, child. 95. **aboon**, above.

Whare Mungo's mither hanged hersel.
Before him Doon pours all his floods;
The doubling storm roars through the woods;
The lightnings flash from pole to pole;
Near and more near the thunders roll;
When, glimmering through the groaning trees, 101
Kirk-Alloway seemed in a bleeze;
Through ilka bore the beams were glancing,
And loud resounded mirth and dancing.

Inspiring bold John Barleycorn! 105
What dangers thou canst make us scorn!
Wi' tippenny, we fear nae evil;
Wi' usquabae, we'll face the Devil!
The swats sae reamed in Tammie's noddle,
Fair play, he cared na deils a boddle. 110
But Maggie stood, right sair astonished,
Till, by the heel and hand admonished,
She ventured forward on the light;
And, wow! Tam saw an unco sight!

Warlocks and witches in a dance! 115
Nae cotillion, brent new frae France,
But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels
Put life and mettle in their heels.
A winnock-bunker in the east, 119
There sat auld Nick, in shape o' beast,
A towzie tyke, black, grim, and large;
To gie them music was his charge.
He screwed the pipes and gart them skirl,
Till roof and rafters a' did dirl.
Coffins stood round, like open presses,
That shawed the dead in their last dresses; 126
And by some devilish cantraip sleight,
Each in its cauld hand held a light,
By which heroic Tam was able
To note upon the haly table, 130
A murderer's banes in gibbet airns;

Twa span-lang, wee, unchristened bairns;
A thief, new-cutted frae the rape,
Wi' his last gasp his gab did gape;
Five tomahawks, wi' bluid red-rusted;
Five scymitars, wi' murder crusted; 136
A garter which a babe had strangled;
A knife, a father's throat had mangled,
Whom his ain son o' life bereft—
The gray hairs yet stack to the heft; 140
Wi' mair of horrible and awfu',
Which ev'n to name wad be unlawfu'.

As Tammie glowered, amazed and curious,
The mirth and fun grew fast and furious.
The piper loud and louder blew; 145
The dancers quick and quicker flew;
They reeled, they set, they crossed, they cleekit,
Till ilka carlin swat and reekit,
And coost her duddies to the wark,
And linket at it in her sark! 150

Now Tam, O Tam! had thae been queans,
A' plump and strapping in their teens,
Their sarks, instead o' creeshie flannen,
Been snaw-white seventeen hunder linen!
Thir breeks o' mine, my only pair, 155
That ance were plush, o' guid blue hair,
I wad hae gi'en them off my hurdies,
For ae blink o' the bonie burdies!
But withered beldams, auld and droll,
Rigwoodie hags wad spean a foal, 160
Louping an' flinging on a crummock,
I wonder did na turn thy stomach.

But Tam kend what was what fu' brawlie;
There was ae winsome wench and wawlie,
That night enlisted in the core, 165

102. **bleeze**, blaze. The foregoing description is in the best ghost-story tradition, but in a moment Burns turns it into laughter. 103. **bore**, crevice, opening. 107. **tippenny**, twopenny. 108. **usquabae**, whiskey. 109. **swats sae reamed**, ale so foamed. 110. **deils**, devils. **boddle**, small copper coin, a trifle. 114. **unco**, strange, unknown. 116. **brent new**, brand-new. 117. **strathspey**, a Scotch dance, much like a reel. 119. **A winnock-bunker**, upon a window-seat. 121. **towzie tyke**, shaggy cur. 123. **pipes**, bagpipes. **gart**, made. **skirl**, scream shrilly. 124. **dirl**, vibrate, rattle. 127. **cantraip sleight**, magical contrivance. 130. **haly table**, communion table. 131. **gibbet airns**, iron chains by which the corpses of malefactors were hung from gibbets after execution.

132. **unchristened bairns**. Unchristened babies were damned according to the stern Calvinistic doctrine. 133. **rape**, rope. 134. **gab**, mouth. 147. **reeled**, whirled. **set**, faced their partners. **crossed**, changed sides. **cleekit**, linked. All these movements belong to a square dance. 148. **carlin**, old woman. **reekit**, steamed. 149. **coost**, threw off. **duddies**, clothes. **wark**, work. 150. **linket**, went. **sark**, shirt. 151. **queans**, young women. 153. **creeshie**, greasy. 154. **seventeen hunder**, very fine. 155. **Thir breeks**, those breeches. 157. **hurdies**, hips. 158. **burdies**, girls. 160. **Rigwoodie**, withered. **spean**, wean. 161. **Louping**, leaping. **crummock**, a walking staff with a crooked head. 163. **kend**, knew. **fu'brawlie**, well, perfectly. 164. **wawlie**, large. 165. **core**, troop.

Lang after kend on Carrick shore
(For mony a beast to dead she shot,
And perished mony a bonie boat,
And shook baith meikle corn and bear,
And kept the country-side in fear). 170
Her cutty sark, o' Paisley harn,
That while a lassie she had worn,
In longitude though sorely scanty,
It was her best, and she was vauntie. 174
Ah! little kend thy reverend grannie,
That sark she coft for her wee Nannie,
Wi' twa pund Scots ('twas a' her riches),
Wad ever graced a dance of witches!
But here my Muse her wing maun cour;
Sic flights are far beyond her power; 180
To sing how Nannie lap and flang
(A souple jade she was and strang),
And how Tam stood, like ane bewitched,
And thought his very een enriched;
Even Satan glowered, and fidged fu' fain,
And hotched and blew wi' might and main
Till first ae caper, syne anither, 187
Tam tint his reason a' thegither,
And roars out, "Weel done, Cutty sark!"
And in an instant all was dark; 190
And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,
When out the hellish legion sallied.

As bees bizz out wi' angry fyke,
When plundering herds assail their byke;
As open pussie's mortal foes, 195
When, pop! she starts before their nose;
As eager runs the market-crowd,
When "Catch the thief!" resounds aloud
So Maggie runs, the witches follow, 199
Wi' mony an eldritch skriech and hollow.

Ah, Tam! ah, Tam! thou'll get thy fairin'!
In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin'!
In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin'!
Kate soon will be a woefu' woman'!
Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg, 205
And win the key-stane of the brig;
There, at them thou thy tail may toss—
A running stream they dare na cross;
But ere the key-stane she could make,
The fient a tail she had to shake! 210
For Nannie, far before the rest,
Hard upon noble Maggie pressed,
And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle;
But little wist she Maggie's mettle!
Ae spring brought off her master hale,
But left behind her ain gray tail. 216
The carlin claught her by the rump,
And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.

Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,
Ilk man and mother's son take heed:
Whene'er to drink you are inclined, 221
Or cutty sarks run in your mind,
Think, ye may buy the joys o'er dear;
Remember Tam O' Shanter's mare.

(1791)

166. **Carrick**, the southern part of Ayrshire. 169. **meikle corn and bear**, much grain and barley. 171. **Her cutty sark**, etc., her short skirt made of coarse linen. Paisley is a Scotch village noted for its weaving, especially of shawls. 174. **vauntie**, proud. 176. **coft**, bought. 177. **pund Scots**. The Scotch pound was worth about one-twelfth of the English pound. 179. **cour**, let down. 184. **een**, eyes. 185. **fidged**, fidgeted. 186. **hotched**, hitched. 187. **syne**, then. 188. **tint**, lost. 193. **fyke**, fuss. 194. **byke**, hive. 195. **pussie**, hare. 200. **eldritch**, fearful, uncanny. 201. **fairin'**, reward. 206. **brig**, bridge. 208. **A running stream.** Cf. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (page 138, line 35).

SIR WALTER SCOTT (1771-1832)

THE EVE OF ST. JOHN

NOTE

In this poem Scott combined many interests. As a boy he had played about the ruin of Smaylh'ome, or Smallholm, Tower, and in after life recalled it with ever-quickening imagination. Near it was fought the battle of Ancram Moor (February 27, 1545), where the Scotch leaders, Archibald Angus, seventh Earl of Douglas, Norman Lesley, and Sir Walter Scott of Buccleuch, the ancestor of the author, defeated the English invaders, Lord Evers and Sir Brian Latoun. The main theme, however, was neither personal nor patriotic, but that of the popular Gothic romances of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, where the element of the supernatural dominated the plot. Cf. headnote to Southey's "The Inchcape Rock" (page 238), and the introductory essay to prose fiction (page II-607). The poem, therefore, is not entirely an imitation of an ancient ballad, as Scott called it, but also a narrative poem expressing the spirit of patriotism and of Gothic romance.

The Baron of Smaylh'ome rose with day,
He spurred his courser on,
Without stop or stay, down the rocky way,
That leads to Brotherstone.

210. **The fient**, etc., the devil a tail she had to shake. 213. **ettle**, zeal. 217. **carlin claught**, witch caught. 219 ff. Chaucer's sense of humor would have enabled him to appreciate this mock moral, but Gray and Wordsworth probably would not have done so. Cf. The moral in "The Elegy" (page 416) and in "The Happy Warrior" (page 463).

The Eve of St. John. A mixture of a pagan and a Christian festival usually celebrated on June 24, but frequently much earlier. On this evening bonfires used to be lighted on all the high hills of England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland. It is a time of rejoicing and of love-making. 1. **Smaylh'ome.** Smallholm Tower in Roxburghshire is a wild border fortress perched upon a crag. 4. **Brotherstone**, a heath near Smaylh'ome.

He went not with the bold Buccleuch, 5
His banner broad to rear;
He went not 'gainst the English yew,
To lift the Scottish spear.

Yet his plate-jack was braced and his helmet was laced,
And his vaunt-brace of proof he wore;
At his saddle-gerthe was a good steel sperthe, 11
Full ten-pound weight and more.

The Baron returned in three days' space,
And his looks were sad and sour;
And weary was his courser's pace, 15
As he reached his rocky tower.

He came not from where Ancram Moor
Ran red with English blood;
Where the Douglas true, and the bold Buccleuch,
'Gainst keen Lord Evers stood. 20

Yet was his helmet hacked and hewed,
His acton pierced and tore,
His ax and his dagger with blood imbued—
But it was not English gore.

He lighted at the Chappellage, 25
He held him close and still;
And he whistled thrice for his little foot-page—
His name was English Will.

"Come thou hither, my little foot-page,
Come hither to my knee; 30
Though thou art young, and tender of age,
I think thou art true to me.

"Come, tell me all that thou hast seen,
And look thou tell me true!
Since I from Smaylho'me Tower have been, 35
What did my lady do?"

5. **Buccleuch.** Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus, raised the Scottish countryside on the invasion of the English. 7. **yew.** The English bows were made from the yew tree. 9. **plate-jack,** a leather coat lined with metal for protection. **braced,** fastened tightly. 10. **vaunt-brace,** armor to protect the forearm. **proof,** firm strength. 11. **sperthe,** battle-ax. 22. **acton,** a wadded jacket worn beneath the armor, or a jacket plated with steel. 25. **Chappellage,** a chapel beside Smaylh'ome Castle.

"My lady, each night, sought the l
light
That burns on the wild Watc
For, from height to height, the be
bright
Of the English foemen told.

"The bittern clamored from the
The wind blew loud and shrill;
Yet the craggy pathway she did
To the eery Beacon Hill.

"I watched her steps, and silent ca
Where she sat her on a stone;
No watchman stood by the d
flame;
It burnéd all alone.

"The second night I kept her in
Till to the fire she came,
And, by Mary's might! an a
knight
Stood by the lonely flame.

"And many a word that warlike
Did speak to my lady there;
But the rain fell fast, and loud ble
blast,
And I heard not what they we

"The third night there the sky was
And the mountain-blast was st
As again I watched the secret pair
On the lonesome Beacon Hill.

"And I heard her name the mid
hour,
And name this holy eve;
And say, 'Come this night to thy l
bower;
Ask no bold Baron's leave.

" 'He lifts his spear with the
Buccleuch;
His lady is all alone;
The door she'll undo to her knight so
On the Eve of good St. John.'

" 'I cannot come; I must not come
I dare not come to thee;

38. **Watchfold,** a crag near Smaylh'ome where fires were lit when the English raided the Borde **eery,** weird or unearthly. **Beacon Hill,** anothe farther away from Smaylh'ome, where beacon fir lighted.

On the Eve of St. John I must wander alone;
In thy bower I may not be.'

"'Now, out on thee, faint-hearted knight!
Thou shouldst not say me nay;
For the eve is sweet, and when lovers meet, 75
Is worth the whole summer's day.

"'And I'll chain the bloodhound, and the warder shall not sound,
And rushes shall be strewed on the stair;
So, by the black rood-stone, and by holy St. John,
I conjure thee, my love, to be there!'

"'Though the bloodhound be mute, and the rush beneath my foot, 81
And the warder his bugle should not blow,
Yet there sleepeth a priest in the chamber to the east,
And my footstep he would know.'

"'O fear not the priest, who sleepeth to the east; 85
For to Dryburgh the way he has ta'en;
And there to say Mass, till three days do pass,
For the soul of a knight that is slain.'

"He turned him around, and grimly he frowned;
Then he laughed right scornfully— 90
'He who says the Mass-rite for the soul of that knight
May as well say Mass for me;

"'At the lone midnight hour, when bad spirits have power,
In thy chamber will I be.'—
With that he was gone, and my lady left alone, 95
And no more did I see."

Then changed, I trow, was that bold Baron's brow,
From the dark to the blood-red high;
"Now tell me the mien of the knight thou hast seen,
For, by Mary, he shall die!" 100

"His arms shone full bright, in the beacon's red light;
His plume it was scarlet and blue;
On his shield was a hound, in a silver leash bound,
And his crest was a branch of the yew."

"Thou liest, thou liest, thou little foot-page, 105
Loud dost thou lie to me!
For that knight is cold, and low laid in the mold,
All under the Eildon-tree."

"Yet hear but my word, my noble lord!
For I heard her name his name; 110
And that lady bright, she called the knight
Sir Richard of Coldinghame."

The bold Baron's brow then changed, I trow,
From high blood-red to pale—
"The grave is deep and dark—and the corpse is stiff and stark— 115
So I may not trust thy tale.

"Where fair Tweed flows round holy Melrose,
And Eildon slopes to the plain,
Full three nights ago, by some secret foe,
That gay gallant was slain. 120

"The varying light deceived thy sight,
And the wild winds drowned the name;
For the Dryburgh bells ring, and the white monks do sing,
For Sir Richard of Coldinghame!"

He passed the court-gate, and he oped the tower grate, 125
And he mounted the narrow stair

79. **black rood-stone**, a very sacred black marble crucifix in Melrose Abbey. 86. **Dryburgh**, a ruined abbey where Scott lies buried. It is situated near Abbotsford, his home.

108. **Eildon-tree**, the tree under which Thomas the Rhymer (see page 214) is supposed to have uttered his prophesies. Eildon is a hill whose summit has three divisions, made supposedly by the medieval magician, Michael Scott. 117. **Tweed**, a river which flows past Abbotsford. **Melrose**, Melrose Abbey, a monastery near Abbotsford on the banks of the Tweed. It is now in ruins.

To the bartizan-seat, where, with maids that on her wait,
He found his lady fair.

That lady sat in mournful mood;
Looked over hill and vale; 130
Over Tweed's fair flood, and Mertoun's wood,
And all down Teviotdale.

"Now hail, now hail, thou lady bright!"—
"Now hail, thou Baron true!
What news, what news from Ancram fight? 135
What news from the bold Buccleuch?"

"The Ancram Moor is red with gore,
For many a Southron fell;
And Buccleuch has charged us, evermore
To watch our beacons well." 140

The lady blushed red, but nothing she said;
Nor added the Baron a word;
Then she stepped down the stair to her chamber fair,
And so did her moody lord.

In sleep the lady mourned, and the Baron tossed and turned, 145
And oft to himself he said—
"The worms around him creep, and his bloody grave is deep,
It cannot give up the dead!"

It was near the ringing of matin-bell,
The night was well-nigh done, 150
When a heavy sleep on that Baron fell,
On the Eve of good St. John.

The lady looked through the chamber fair
By the light of a dying flame;
And she was aware of a knight stood there— 155
Sir Richard of Coldinghame!

"Alas! away, away!" she cried,
"For the holy Virgin's sake!"—
"Lady, I know who sleeps by thy side;
But, lady, he will not awake. 160

"By Eildon-tree, for long nights three,
In bloody grave have I lain;
The Mass and the death-prayer are said for me,
But lady, they are said in vain.

"By the Baron's brand, near Tweed's fair strand, 165
Most foully slain I fell;
And my restless sprite on the beacon's height
For a space is doomed to dwell.

"At our trysting-place, for a certain space
I must wander to and fro; 170
But I had not had power to come to thy bower,
Hadst thou not conjured me so."

Love mastered fear—her brow she crossed;
"How, Richard, hast thou sped?
And art thou saved, or art thou lost?"—
The Vision shook his head! 176

"Who spilleth life, shall forfeit life,
So bid thy lord believe;
That lawless love is guilt above,
This awful sign receive." 180

He laid his left palm on an oaken beam;
His right upon her hand;
The lady shrunk, and fainting sunk,
For it scorched like a fiery brand.

The sable score, of fingers four, 185
Remains on that board impressed;
And for evermore that lady wore
A covering on her wrist.

There is a nun in Dryburgh bower,
Ne'er looks upon the sun; 190
There is a monk in Melrose Tower,
He speaketh word to none.

That nun, who ne'er beholds the day,
That monk, who speaks to none—
That nun was Smaylh'ome's Lady gay,
That monk the bold Baron. (1801)

127. **bartizan**, a platform or tower projecting from a castle wall, serving for a look-out and for defense. 131. **Mertoun's wood**, near Smaylh'ome. 132. **Teviotdale**, the valley of the River Teviot, which is situated in Roxburghshire. The river flows into the Tweed. 138. **Southron**, Scottish for a southern man, hence an Englishman.

165. **brand**, sword. 169. **trysting-place**, meeting-place. 174. **sped**, prospered. 177. **spilleth**, causes the loss of. 184. **scorched**, from a tradition that certain evil spirits or ghosts burned whatever they touched.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE (1772-1834)

Note

Coleridge was a creature of many projects and interests, in none of which he persisted long. The more brilliant half of his life terminated in 1801, after which he rambled from one home and one literary project to another, frequently depressed, and frequently under the influence of drugs. In 1797 he settled at Nether Stowey, near the Quantock Hills. Within the next twenty months he met Wordsworth and with him formulated and executed *The Lyrical Ballads*, to which *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* was his most important contribution.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner is built upon folklore traditions, but instead of telling the story from the simple human point of view, or as a conscious imitation of medieval prototypes, Coleridge has been able to introduce the mystic and supernatural so plausibly that the narrative seems as real to us as our own dreams when we are under their influence. In lyric poetry Donne, Blake, James Thomson—author of *The City of Dreadful Night*—Francis Thompson, and Poe have produced similar effects; while in the short story Poe alone has equally sustained power. Of recent years narrative poetry has portrayed supernatural forces at work in everyday life, and Masefield's *The Widow in the Bye Street*, "The Daffodil Fields" and "The River," together with much of Masters's *Spoon River Anthology* are realistic pendants to *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

IN SEVEN PARTS

Argument

How a Ship having passed the Line was driven by storms to the cold Country toward the South Pole; and how from thence she made her course to the tropical Latitude of the Great Pacific Ocean; and of the strange things that befell; and in what manner the Ancyent Marinere came back to his own Country.

PART I

An ancient Mariner meeteth three Gallants bidden to a wedding-feast, and detaineth one.

It is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
"By thy long gray beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?

The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide, 5
And I am next of kin;
The guests are met, the feast is set—
May'st hear the merry din."

He holds him with his skinny hand,
"There was a ship," quoth he. 10
"Hold off! unhand me, graybeard loon!"
Eftsoons his hand dropped he.

He holds him with his glittering eye;
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child— 15
The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest is spellbound by the eye of the old seafaring man, and constrained to hear his tale.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone—
He cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner: 20

"The ship was cheered, the harbor cleared;
Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the lighthouse top.

The sun came up upon the left;
Out of the sea came he! 26
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea.

The Mariner tells how the ship sailed southward with a good wind and fair weather till it reached the Line.

Higher and higher every day,
Till over the mast at noon—" 30
The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.

2. **And he stoppeth one of three.** Folklore contains many accounts of guilty men whose only relief from anguish was a continual confession of their crimes. The confession idea is at the bottom of most of the poems in *Spoon River Anthology*.

12. **Eftsoons**, straightway. 16. **hath his will.** The inability of the Wedding-Guest to depart is like a dream in which one is pursued, but may not run away. Cf. Thompson's *The Hound of Heaven* (page 591). 23. **kirk**, church. 29 (Marginal note). **Line**, the equator. 32. **bassoon**, a wood-wind instrument of three octaves much used with clarinets, hautboys, and violins to accompany the service in certain country churches in England and Scotland.

The Wedding-Guest heareth the bridal music; but the Mariner continueth his tale.

The bride hath paced into the hall,
Red as a rose is she;
Nodding their heads before her goes 35
The merry minstrelsy.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,
Yet he cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner. 40

The ship drawn by a storm toward the South Pole.

"And now the Storm-blast came, and he
Was tyrannous and strong;
He struck with his o'ertaking wings,
And chased us south along.

With sloping masts and dipping prow, 45
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe,
And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
And southward aye we fled. 50

And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold;
And ice, mast-high, came floating by
As green as emerald.

The land of ice, and of fearful sounds, where no living thing was to be seen;

And through the drifts the snowy clifts 55
Did send a dismal sheen;
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken—
The ice was all between.

The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around; 60
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound!

47. **treads**, etc., "as one pursued with yell and blow ever treads the shadow of his foe," because of the close pursuit. 56. **sheen**, glittering light. 57. **ken**, spy. 62. **swound**, trance, faint.

Till a great sea-bird called the Albatross, came through the snow-fog, and was received with great joy and hospitality.

At length did cross an Albatross;
Thorough the fog it came;
As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hailed it in God's name. 66

It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
And round and round it flew.
The ice did split with a thunder-fit;
The helmsman steered us through!

And lo! the Albatross proveth a bird of good omen, and followeth the ship as it returned northward through fog and floating ice.

And a good south wind sprung up behind; 71
The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or play,
Came to the mariners' hollo!

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud, 75
It perched for vespers nine;
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white
Glimmered the white moonshine."

The ancient Mariner inhospitably killeth the pious bird of good omen.

"God save thee, ancient Mariner,
From the fiends that plague thee thus!— 80
Why look'st thou so?"—"With my crossbow
I shot the Albatross.

PART II

"The sun now rose upon the right;
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in mist, and on the left
Went down into the sea. 86

And the good south wind still blew behind,
But no sweet bird did follow,
Nor any day, for food or play,
Came to the mariners' hollo! 90

His shipmates cry out against the ancient Mariner, for killing the bird of good luck.

And I had done an hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe;
For all averred I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow.

76. **vespers**, evening, or the evening prayers.

'Ah, wretch!' said they, 'the bird to slay, 95
That made the breeze to blow!'

But when the fog cleared off, they justify the same, and thus make themselves accomplices in the crime.

Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,
The glorious sun uprist;
Then all averred, I had killed the bird
That brought the fog and mist.
''Twas right,' said they, 'such birds to slay, 101
That bring the fog and mist.'

The fair breeze continues; the ship enters the Pacific Ocean and sails northward, even till it reaches the Line.

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea. 106

The ship hath been suddenly becalmed.

Down dropped the breeze, the sails dropped down,
'Twas sad as sad could be;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea! 110

All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the moon.

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion; 116
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

And the Albatross begins to be avenged.

Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink; 120
Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink.

The very deep did rot—O Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs 125
Upon the slimy sea.

About, about, in reel and rout
The death-fires danced at night;
The water, like a witch's oils, 129
Burned green, and blue, and white.

A Spirit had followed them; one of the invisible inhabitants of this planet, neither departed souls nor angels; concerning whom the learned Jew Josephus and the Platonic Constantinopolitan, Michael Psellus, may be consulted. They are very numerous, and there is no climate or element without one or more.

And some in dreams assuréd were
Of the Spirit that plagued us so;
Nine fathom deep he had followed us
From the land of mist and snow.

The shipmates in their sore distress would fain throw the whole guilt on the ancient Mariner; in sign whereof they hang the dead sea-bird round his neck.

And every tongue, through utter drought, 135
Was withered at the root;
We could not speak, no more than if
We had been choked with soot.

Ah! well-a-day!—what evil looks
Had I from old and young! 140
Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung.

PART III

"There passed a weary time. Each throat
Was parched, and glazed each eye.
A weary time! a weary time! 145
How glazed each weary eye!
When looking westward, I beheld
A something in the sky.

The ancient Mariner beholdeth a sign in the element afar off.

At first it seemed a little speck,
And then it seemed a mist; 150
It moved, and moved, and took at last
A certain shape, I wist.

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!
And still it neared and neared;
As if it dodged a water-sprite, 155
It plunged and tacked and veered.

104. **furrow**, the wake of a ship.

130. **Burned green**, etc. Cf. Hrothgar's description of Grendel's pool, *Beowulf* (page 29). 131 (Marginal note). Scholars and philosophers of Roman and medieval times worked out elaborate theories about the spirit world. Flavius Josephus (37-95?), the Jewish historian, wrote not merely *The Jewish War* (67-73 A. D.), but *The Jewish Antiquities* as well. It is to the latter book that Coleridge refers. Michael Constantine Psellus, the younger, was a philosopher and statesman of the Byzantine emperors in the eleventh century. His philosophical treatises are numerous.

At its nearer approach, it seemeth him to be a ship; and at a dear ransom he freeth his speech from the bonds of thirst.

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
We could nor laugh nor wail;
Through utter drought all dumb we stood!
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
And cried, 'A sail! a sail!' 161

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
Agape they heard me call;
Gramercy! they for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath drew in, 165
As they were drinking all.

A flash of joy;

And horror follows. For can it be a *ship* that comes onward without wind or tide?

'See! see!' (I cried) 'She tacks no more!
Hither to work us weal;
Without a breeze, without a tide,
She steadies with upright keel!'

The western wave was all aflame
The day was well-nigh done! 172
Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad bright sun;
When that strange shape drove suddenly 175
Betwixt us and the sun.

It seemeth him but the skeleton of a ship.

And straight the sun was flecked with bars
(Heaven's Mother send us grace!)
As if through a dungeon-grate he peered
With broad and burning face. 180

Alas! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
How fast she nears and nears!
Are those her sails that glance in the sun,
Like restless gossameres?

And its ribs are seen as bars on the face of the setting sun. The Specter-Woman and her Death-mate, and no other on board the skeleton-ship.

Are those her ribs through which the sun 185
Did peer, as through a grate?
And is that Woman all her crew?
Is that a Death? and are there two?
Is Death that Woman's mate?

Her lips were red, her looks were free, 190
Her locks were yellow as gold;
Her skin was as white as leprosy;
The Nightmare Life-in-Death was she,
Who thicks man's blood with cold. 194

Like vessel, like crew!

The naked hulk alongside came,
And the twain were casting dice;
'The game is done! I've won! I've won!'
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

Death and Life-in-Death have diced for the ship's crew, and she (the latter) winneth the ancient Mariner.

The sun's rim dips; the stars rush out;
At one stride comes the dark; 200
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,
Off shot the specter-bark.

No twilight within the courts of the sun.

We listened and looked sideways up!
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My lifeblood seemed to sip! 205
The stars were dim, and thick the night;
The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed white;
From the sails the dew did drip—
Till clomb above the eastern bar
The hornéd moon, with one bright star 210
Within the nether tip.

At the rising of the moon.

One after one, by the star-dogged moon,
Too quick for groan or sigh,
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eye. 215

One after another

Four times fifty living men
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan),
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropped down one by one.

His shipmates drop down dead.

The souls did from their bodies fly— 220
They fled to bliss or woe!
And every soul, it passed me by,
Like the whizz of my crossbow!"

But Life-in-Death begins her work on the ancient Mariner.

168. **weal**, good. 184. **gossameres**, films as tenuous as spider webs floating in the air.

210. **hornéd moon**, etc. Obviously no star could be seen within the circumference of the moon.

PART IV

The Wedding-Guest feareth that a spirit is talking to him;

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!
I fear thy skinny hand! 225
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.

But the ancient Mariner assureth him of his bodily life, and proceedeth to relate his horrible penance.

I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand, so brown"—
"Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest! 230
This body dropped not down.

Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide, wide sea!
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony. 235

He despiseth the creatures of the calm,

The many men, so beautiful!
And they all dead did lie;
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on; and so did I.

And envieth that they should live, and so many lie dead.

I looked upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away; 241
I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

I looked to Heaven, and tried to pray;
But or ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came, and made 246
My heart as dry as dust.

I closed my lids, and kept them close,
And the balls like pulses beat;
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky 250
Lay like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

But the curse liveth for him in the eye of the dead men.

The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
Nor rot nor reek did they;
The look with which they looked on me 255
Had never passed away.

An orphan's curse would drag to hell
A spirit from on high,
But oh! more horrible than that
Is a curse in a dead man's eye!
Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse 261
And yet I could not die.

In his loneliness and fixedness he yearneth toward the journeying moon, and the stars that still sojourn, yet still move onward; and everywhere the blue sky belongs to them, and is their appointed rest and their native country and their own natural homes, which they enter unannounced, as lords that are certainly expected and yet there is a silent joy at their arrival.

The moving moon went up the sky,
And nowhere did abide;
Softly she was going up 265
And a star or two beside—

Her beams bemocked the sultry main,
Like April hoarfrost spread;
But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
The charméd water burned alway
A still and awful red. 271

By the light of the moon he beholdeth God's creatures of the great calm,

Beyond the shadow of the ship,
I watched the water-snakes;
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they reared, the elfish light 275
Fell off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire;
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black
They coiled and swam; and every track 280
Was a flash of golden fire.

Their beauty and their happiness.

O happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare;
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware! 285

He blesseth them in his heart.

Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I blessed them unaware.

The spell begins to break.

The selfsame moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea. 291

254. **reek,** give off vapor.

PART V

"Oh sleep! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole!
To Mary Queen the praise be given!
She sent the gentle sleep from heaven, 295
That slid into my soul.

By grace of the holy Mother, the ancient Mariner is refreshed with rain.

The silly buckets on the deck,
That had so long remained,
I dreamt that they were filled with dew;
And when I awoke, it rained. 300

My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
My garments all were dank;
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
And still my body drank.

I moved, and could not feel my limbs, 305
I was so light—almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessed ghost.

He heareth sounds, and seeth strange sights and commotions in the sky and the element.

And soon I heard a roaring wind;
It did not come anear; 310
But with its sound it shook the sails
That were so thin and sear.

The upper air burst into life!
And a hundred fire-flags sheen;
To and fro they were hurried about; 315
And to and fro, and in and out,
The wan stars danced between.

And the coming wind did roar more loud,
And the sails did sigh like sedge;
And the rain poured down from one black cloud; 320
The moon was at its edge.

The thick, black cloud was cleft, and still
The moon was at its side;

297. **silly**, useless. 312. **sear**, dry. 314. **a hundred**, etc., "a hundred bright flames of fire like flags." *Sheen* here means "bright."

Like waters shot from some high crag,
The lightning fell with never a jag, 325
A river steep and wide.

The bodies of the ship's crew are inspired, and the ship moves on;

The loud wind never reached the ship,
Yet now the ship moved on!
Beneath the lightning and the moon
The dead men gave a groan. 330

They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose,
Nor spake, nor moved their eyes;
It had been strange, even in a dream,
To have seen those dead men rise.

The helmsman steered, the ship moved on; 335
Yet never a breeze up-blew.
The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,
Where they were wont to do;
They raised their limbs like lifeless tools—
We were a ghastly crew. 340

But not by the souls of the men, nor by demons of earth or middle air, but by a blessed troop of angelic spirits, sent down by the invocation of the guardian saint.

The body of my brother's son
Stood by me, knee to knee;
The body and I pulled at one rope,
But he said naught to me."

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!"
"Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest!
'Twas not those souls that fled in pain, 347
Which to their corses came again,
But a troop of spirits blest;

For when it dawned—they dropped their arms 350
And clustered round the mast;
Sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths,
And from their bodies passed.

325. **The lightning**, etc., "the lightning fell straight," i.e., without any fork or zigzag. 348. **corses**, corpses.

Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
Then darted to the sun; 355
Slowly the sounds came back again,
Now mixed, now one by one.

Sometimes a-dropping from the sky
I heard the skylark sing;
Sometimes all little birds that are, 360
How they seemed to fill the sea and air
With their sweet jargoning!

And now 'twas like all instruments,
Now like a lonely flute;
And now it is an angel's song, 365
That makes the heavens be mute.

It ceased; yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June, 370
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.

Till noon we quietly sailed on,
Yet never a breeze did breathe;
Slowly and smoothly went the ship, 375
Moved onward from beneath.

The lonesome Spirit from the South Pole carries on the ship as far as the Line, in obedience to the angelic troop, but still requireth vengeance.

Under the keel nine fathom deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The Spirit slid; and it was he
That made the ship to go. 380
The sails at noon left off their tune,
And the ship stood still also.

The sun, right up above the mast,
Had fixed her to the ocean;
But in a minute she 'gan stir, 385
With a short, uneasy motion—
Backwards and forwards half her length
With a short, uneasy motion.

Then like a pawing horse let go,
She made a sudden bound; 390
It flung the blood into my head,
And I fell down in a swound.

How long in that same fit I lay,
I have not to declare;
But ere my living life returned,
I heard and in my soul discerned
Two voices in the air. 397

'Is it he?' quoth one, 'Is this the man?
By Him who died on cross,
With his cruel bow he laid full low 400
The harmless Albatross.

The Polar Spirit's fellow demons, the invisible inhabitants of the element, take part in his wrong; and two of them relate, one to the other, that penance long and heavy for the ancient Mariner hath been accorded to the Polar Spirit, who returneth southward.

The Spirit who bideth by himself
In the land of mist and snow,
He loved the bird that loved the man
Who shot him with his bow.' 405

The other was a softer voice,
As soft as honey-dew;
Quoth he, 'The man hath penance done,
And penance more will do.'

PART VI

First Voice

"'But tell me, tell me! speak again,
Thy soft response renewing— 411
What makes that ship drive on so fast?
What is the ocean doing?'

Second Voice

'Still as a slave before his lord,
The ocean hath no blast; 415
His great bright eye most silently
Up to the moon is cast—

The Mariner hath been cast into a trance; for the angelic power causeth the vessel to drive northward faster than human life could endure.

If he may know which way to go;
For she guides him smooth or grim.
See, brother, see! how graciously
She looketh down on him.' 421

FIRST VOICE

'But why drives on that ship so fast,
Without or wave or wind?'

SECOND VOICE

'The air is cut away before,
And closes from behind. 425

Fly, brother, fly! more high, more high!
Or we shall be belated;
For slow and slow that ship will go,
When the Mariner's trance is abated.'

The supernatural motion is retarded; the Mariner awakes, and his penance begins anew.

I woke, and we were sailing on
As in a gentle weather. 431
'Twas night, calm night, the moon was high;
The dead men stood together.

All stood together on the deck,
For a charnel-dungeon fitter; 435
All fixed on me their stony eyes,
That in the moon did glitter.

The pang, the curse, with which they died,
Had never passed away;
I could not draw my eyes from theirs, 440
Nor turn them up to pray.

The curse is finally expiated.

And now this spell was snapped; once more
I viewed the ocean green,
And looked far forth, yet little saw
Of what had else been seen— 445

Like one that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round, walks on,
And turns no more his head,
Because he knows a frightful fiend 450
Doth close behind him tread.

424. **The air**, etc. Coleridge uses this method to obviate a description of the return voyage. As in a ballad, the action moves quickly. 435. **charnel-dungeon**, burial vault. 450. **a frightful fiend**, etc. He is still haunted by the nightmare motive of pursuit.

But soon there breathed a wind on me,
Nor sound nor motion made;
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade. 455

It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek
Like a meadow-gale of spring—
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship, 460
Yet she sailed softly, too;
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze—
On me alone it blew.

And the ancient Mariner beholdeth his native country.

Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed
The lighthouse top I see? 465
Is this the hill? Is this the kirk?
Is this mine own countree?

We drifted o'er the harbor-bar,
And I with sobs did pray—
'O let me be awake, my God! 470
Or let me sleep alway.'

The harbor-bay was clear as glass,
So smoothly it was strewn!
And on the bay the moonlight lay,
And the shadow of the moon. 475

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,
That stands above the rock;
The moonlight steeped in silentness
The steady weathercock.

The angelic spirits leave the dead bodies.

And the bay was white with silent light, 480
Till rising from the same,
Full many shapes, that shadows were,
In crimson colors came.

And appear in their own forms of light.

A little distance from the prow
Those crimson shadows were; 485
I turned my eyes upon the deck—
O Christ! what saw I there!

Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
And by the holy rood!
A man all light, a seraph-man,
On every corse there stood. 491

This seraph-band, each waved his hand—
It was a heavenly sight!
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light; 495

This seraph-band, each waved his hand;
No voice did they impart—
No voice; but oh! the silence sank
Like music on my heart.

But soon I heard the dash of oars, 500
I heard the Pilot's cheer;
My head was turned perforce away,
And I saw a boat appear.

The Pilot, and the Pilot's boy,
I heard them coming fast; 505
Dear Lord in heaven! it was a joy
The dead men could not blast.

I saw a third—I heard his voice;
It is the Hermit good!
He singeth loud his godly hymns
That he makes in the wood. 511
He'll shrieve my soul, he'll wash away
The Albatross's blood.

PART VII

The Hermit of the wood

"This Hermit good lives in that wood
Which slopes down to the sea;
How loudly his sweet voice he rears! 516
He loves to talk with marineres
That come from a far countree.

He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve—
He hath a cushion plump; 520
It is the moss that wholly hides
The rotted old oak-stump.

The skiff-boat neared; I heard them talk,
'Why this is strange, I trow!
Where are those lights so many and fair 525
That signal made but now?'

Approaceth the ship with wonder.

'Strange, by my faith!' the Hermit said—
'And they answered not our cheer!
The planks look warped! and see those sails
How thin they are and sear! 530
I never saw aught like to them,
Unless perchance it were

Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
My forest-brook along;
When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow, 535
And the owlet whoops to the wolf below
That eats the she-wolf's young.'

'Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish look'—
(The Pilot made reply)
'I am a-feared'—'Push on, push on!' 540
Said the Hermit cheerily.

The boat came closer to the ship,
But I nor spake nor stirred;
The boat came close beneath the ship, 544
And straight a sound was heard.

The ship suddenly sinketh.

Under the water it rumbled on,
Still louder and more dread;
It reached the ship, it split the bay;
The ship went down like lead.

The ancient Mariner is saved in the Pilot's boat.

Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound, 550
Which sky and ocean smote,
Like one that hath been seven days drowned

489. **holy rood**, cross of Christ. 490. **seraph-man**, angel. 512. **shrieve**, absolve from sin.

535. **ivy-tod**, ivy-bush.

My body lay afloat;
But swift as dreams, myself I found
Within the Pilot's boat. 555

Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,
The boat spun round and round;
And all was still, save that the hill
Was telling of the sound.

I moved my lips—the Pilot shrieked 560
And fell down in a fit;
The holy Hermit raised his eyes
And prayed where he did sit.

I took the oars; the Pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go, 565
Laughed loud and long, and all the while
His eyes went to and fro.
'Ha! ha!' quoth he, 'full plain I see,
The Devil knows how to row.'

And now, all in my own countree,
I stood on the firm land! 571
The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

The ancient Mariner earnestly entreateth the Hermit to shrieve him; and the penance of life falls on him,

'O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!'
The Hermit crossed his brow.
'Say quick,' quoth he, 'I bid thee say— 576
What manner of man art thou?'

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
With a woeful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale;
And then it left me free. 581

And ever and anon throughout his future life an agony constraineth him to travel from land to land,

Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns;
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns. 585

I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me—
To him my tale I teach. 590

What loud uproar bursts from that door!
The wedding-guests are there;
But in the garden-bower the bride
And bride-maids singing are;
And hark the little vesper bell,
Which biddeth me to prayer! 596

O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide, wide sea;
So lonely 'twas that God himself
Scarce seeméd there to be. 600

O sweeter than the marriage feast,
'Tis sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company!—

To walk together to the kirk, 605
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends,
Old men, and babes, and loving friends,
And youths and maidens gay!

And to teach, by his own example, love and reverence to all things that God made and loveth.

Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!
He prayeth well, who loveth well,
Both man and bird and beast.

He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all." 617

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone; and now the Wedding-Guest 620
Turned from the bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunned,
And is of sense forlorn;
A sadder and a wiser man
He rose the morrow morn.

(1798)

623. **forlorn**, deprived.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH
(1770-1850)

LAODAMIA

NOTE

Wordsworth here narrates with dignity, restraint, and simplicity a Greek myth of the Trojan War. The Delphic oracle had prophesied that whatever side first lost a warrior would win the war. Protesilaus urged his ship ahead of the Grecian flotilla, leaped on the beach of Troy, and was slain by the Trojan Hector. His wife, Laodamia, besought the gods that he might be restored to her, if only for three hours. Her prayer was granted, and Hermes, the messenger of the gods, conducted the shade of Protesilaus to Laodamia at their palace in Thessaly. On the expiration of the three hours Laodamia died. Wordsworth became interested in the legend through the part which related how the trees about the tomb of Protesilaus grew until they were tall enough to behold the walls of Troy, when they immediately withered.

"With sacrifice before the rising morn
Vows have I made by fruitless hope inspired;
And from the infernal gods, 'mid shades forlorn
Of night, my slaughtered lord have I required.
Celestial pity I again implore; 5
Restore him to my sight—great Jove, restore!"

So speaking, and by fervent love endowed
With faith, the suppliant heavenward lifts her hands;
While, like the sun emerging from a cloud,
Her countenance brightens—and her eye expands; 10
Her bosom heaves and spreads, her stature grows;
And she expects the issue in repose.

O terror! what hath she perceived?—O joy!
What doth she look on?—whom doth she behold?
Her hero slain upon the beach of Troy? 15
His vital presence? his corporeal mold!
It is—if sense deceive her not—'tis he!
And a god leads him, wingéd Mercury!

Mild Hermes spake—and touched her with his wand
That calms all fear: "Such grace hath crowned thy prayer, 20
Laodamía! that at Jove's command
Thy husband walks the paths of upper air.
He comes to tarry with thee three hours space;
Accept the gift, behold him face to face!

Forth sprang the impassioned queen her lord to clasp; 25
Again that consummation she essayed;
But unsubstantial form eludes her grasp;
As often as that eager grasp was made,
The phantom parts—but parts to reunite,
And re-assume his place before her sight. 30

"Protesiláus, lo! thy guide is gone!
Confirm, I pray, the vision with thy voice.
This is our palace—yonder is thy throne;
Speak, and the floor thou tread'st on will rejoice.
Not to appal me have the gods bestowed
This precious boon; and blest a sad abode." 36

"Great Jove, Laodamía! doth not leave
His gifts imperfect. Specter though I be,
I am not sent to scare thee or deceive,
But in reward of thy fidelity. 40
And something also did my worth obtain;
For fearless virtue bringeth boundless gain.

Laodamia. Written at Rydal Mount. "The incident of the trees growing and withering put the subject into my thoughts, and I wrote with the hope of giving it a loftier tone than, so far as I know, has been given to it by any of the Ancients who have treated of it. It cost me more trouble than almost anything of equal length I have ever written." [Wordsworth's note.] 3. **infernal gods**, Pluto and Proserpine, rulers of Hades and of the dead.

18. **Mercury**, the messenger of the gods and the escort of the dead. He was called Hermes by the Greeks.

"Thou knowest the Delphic oracle foretold
That the first Greek who touched the Trojan strand
Should die; but me the threat could not withhold; 45
A generous cause a victim did demand;
And forth I leaped upon the sandy plain;
A self-devoted chief—by Hector slain."

"Supreme of heroes—bravest, noblest, best!
Thy matchless courage I bewail no more, 50
Which then, when tens of thousands were deprest
By doubt, propelled thee to the fatal shore;
Thou found'st—and I forgive thee—here thou art—
A nobler counselor than my poor heart.

"But thou, though capable of sternest deed, 55
Wert kind as resolute, and good as brave;
And he, whose power restores thee, hath decreed
Thou should'st elude the malice of the grave.
Redundant are thy locks, thy lips as fair
As when their breath enriched Thessalian air. 60

"No specter greets me—no vain shadow this;
Come, blooming hero, place thee by my side!
Give, on this well-known couch, one nuptial kiss
To me, this day, a second time thy bride!"
Jove frowned in heaven; the conscious Parcae threw 65
Upon those roseate lips a Stygian hue.

"This visage tells thee that my doom is past;
Nor should the change be mourned, even if the joys
Of sense were able to return as fast
And surely as they vanish. Earth destroys 70
Those raptures duly — Erebus disdains;
Calm pleasures there abide—majestic pains.

"Be taught, O faithful consort, to control
Rebellious passion; for the gods approve
The depth, and not the tumult, of the soul; 75
A fervent, not ungovernable, love.
Thy transports moderate; and meekly mourn
When I depart, for brief is my sojourn—"

"Ah, wherefore?—Did not Hercules by force
Wrest from the guardian Monster of the tomb 80
Alcestis, a reanimated corse,
Given back to dwell on earth in vernal bloom?
Medea's spells dispersed the weight of years.
And Aeson stood a youth 'mid youthful peers.

"The gods to us are merciful—and they
Yet further may relent; for mightier far 86
Than strength of nerve and sinew, or the sway
Of magic potent over sun and star,
Is love, though oft to agony distrest,
And though his favorite seat be feeble woman's breast. 90

"But if thou goest, I follow—" "Peace!" he said—
She looked upon him and was calmed and cheered;
The ghastly color from his lips had fled;

48. **Hector**, the son of King Priam of Troy, and the most valiant of the Trojans. 59. **Redundant**, luxuriant. 60. **Thessalian.** Thessaly was a kingdom in the northeast of Greece. 65. **Parcae**, the three Fates. 66. **Stygian**, deathly. The River Styx flowed through the border of the Greek Hades, and the dead were ferried across it.

71. **Erebus**, the dusky approach to Hades. 79. **Hercules.** Lines 79-82 allude to the Greek myth that when Alcestis, the aunt of Laodamia, died for her husband, Admetus, King of Pherae, Hercules overthrew Death at her tomb, and brought her back to life. 83. **Medea**, the enchantress of Colchis, who aided Jason to win the golden fleece. On Jason's return home, Medea, by her incantations, restored his father, Aeson, to youth.

In his deportment, shape, and mien appeared
Elysian beauty, melancholy grace, 95
Brought from a pensive though a happy place.

He spake of love, such love as spirits feel
In worlds whose course is equable and pure;
No fears to beat away—no strife to heal—
The past unsighed for, and the future sure; 100
Spake of heroic arts in graver mood
Revived, with finer harmony pursued;

Of all that is most beauteous—imaged there
In happier beauty; more pellucid streams,
An ampler ether, a diviner air, 105
And fields invested with purpureal gleams;
Climes which the sun, who sheds the brightest day
Earth knows, is all unworthy to survey.

Yet there the soul shall enter which hath earned
That privilege by virtue. "Ill," said he, 110
"The end of man's existence I discerned,
Who from ignoble games and revelry
Could draw, when we had parted, vain delight,
While tears were thy best pastime, day and night;

"And while my youthful peers before my eyes 115
(Each hero following his peculiar bent)
Prepared themselves for glorious enterprise
By martial sports—or, seated in the tent,
Chieftains and kings in council were detained;
What time the fleet at Aulis lay enchained. 120

95. **Elysian**, pertaining to the Grecian fields of the happy dead. 104. **pellucid**, transparent. 105. **ether**, the upper air. 120. **Aulis**, a harbor on the eastern coast of Greece, where the Greek fleet lay becalmed on its way to Troy, until Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter, Iphigenia.

"The wished-for wind was given—I then revolved
The oracle, upon the silent sea;
And, if no worthier led the way, resolved
That, of a thousand vessels, mine should be
The foremost prow in pressing to the strand— 125
Mine the first blood that tinged the Trojan sand.

"Yet bitter, ofttimes bitter was the pang
When of thy loss I thought, belovéd wife!
On thee too fondly did my memory hang,
And on the joys we shared in mortal life— 130
The paths which we had trod—these fountains, flowers,
My new-planned cities, and unfinished towers.

"But should suspense permit the foe to cry,
'Behold they tremble!—haughty their array,
Yet of their number no one dares to die?' 135
In soul I swept the indignity away;
Old frailties then recurred—but lofty thought,
In act embodied, my deliverance wrought.

"And thou, though strong in love, art all too weak
In reason, in self-government too slow;
I counsel thee by fortitude to seek 141
Our blest reunion in the shades below.
The invisible world with thee hath sympathized;
Be thy affections raised and solemnized.

"Learn, by a mortal yearning, to ascend— 145
Seeking a higher object. Love was given,
Encouraged, sanctioned, chiefly for that end;

For this the passion to excess was driven—
That self might be annulled; her bondage prove
The fetters of a dream, opposed to love."——

Aloud she shrieked! for Hermes reappears!
Round the dear shade she would have clung—'tis vain.
The hours are past—too brief had they been years;
And him no mortal effort can detain.
Swift, toward the realms that know not earthly day,
He through the portal takes his silent way,
And on the palace-floor a lifeless corse she lay.

Thus, all in vain exhorted and reproved,
She perished; and, as for a willful crime,
By the just gods whom no weak pity moved,
Was doomed to wear out her appointed time,
Apart from happy ghosts, that gather flowers
Of blissful quiet 'mid unfading bowers.

—Yet tears to human suffering are due;
And mortal hopes defeated and o'erthrown
Are mourned by man, and not by man alone,
As fondly he believes.—Upon the side
Of Hellespont (such faith was entertained)
A knot of spiry trees for ages grew
From out the tomb of him for whom she died;
And ever, when such stature they had gained
That Ilium's walls were subject to their view,
The trees' tall summits withered at the sight;
A constant interchange of growth and blight! (1815)

168. **Hellespont**, the strait between Asia and Europe near Troy. 169. **spiry**, tall, tapering. 172. **Ilium**, the Greek name for Troy.

WILLIAM MORRIS (1834-1896)

From THE EARTHLY PARADISE

AN APOLOGY

Note

The life of William Morris was spent in an enthusiastic and widespread attempt to create the beautiful in interior decoration, painting, and poetry. Morris chose the subjects for his long narrative poems from classical mythology, Scandinavian sagas, and romances of chivalry. His chief interest was in the story, which he enriched with descriptions of natural beauty such as we first saw in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Morals and an ethical sense do not dominate the stories, but the play of emotion is everywhere manifest.

In *The Earthly Paradise* Morris employed a mechanical device similar to that of Chaucer in *The Canterbury Tales* in order to motivate the narration of a group of stories from classical mythology and medieval folklore. Unlike Chaucer, he is not interested in the narrators, nor does he delve deeply into the complexities of human character. For Morris the tales are in themselves sufficient justification for a poetic narrative, and he lingers only to bring out the beauty of the story or the natural environment. He idealizes beauty as did the Celts, and his stories are told in the past as if in that far time such perfect beauty and happiness were alone possible. It is interesting to observe that Morris used lyric interludes with his narrative, as did the Celtic bards in the mythological and heroic cycles of early Celtic narrative poetry. The mechanical device he employed was to have a shipwrecked band of medieval fifteenth-century mariners sail from Europe, in disgust at conditions, and finally chance upon an island where live the survivors of Greek culture. Twice a month at banquets the mariners relate stories taken from European folklore, and their hosts reply with stories taken from Greek mythology, one story being told at each banquet. There are twenty-four stories in all, and the lyric headlinks cover the twelve months of the year. The attitude of Morris is revealed in the lyric to March and in that section of the narrative prologue with which our selection opens.

Of Heaven or Hell I have no power to sing,
I cannot ease the burden of your fears,
Or make quick-coming death a little thing,
Or bring again the pleasures of past years,
Nor for my words shall ye forget your tears,

Or hope again for aught that I can say,
The idle singer of an empty day.

But rather, when aweary of your mirth,
From full hearts still unsatisfied ye sigh,
And, feeling kindly unto all the earth, 10
Grudge every minute as it passes by,
Made the more mindful that the sweet days die—
Remember me a little then, I pray,
The idle singer of an empty day.

The heavy trouble, the bewildering care
That weighs us down who live and earn our bread, 16
These idle verses have no power to bear;
So let me sing of names rememberéd,
Because they, living not, can ne'er be dead,
Or long time take their memory quite away 20
From us poor singers of an empty day.

Dreamer of dreams, born out of my due time,
Why should I strive to set the crooked straight?
Let it suffice me that my murmuring rime
Beats with light wing against the ivory gate, 25
Telling a tale not too importunate
To those who in the sleepy region stay,
Lulled by the singer of an empty day.

Folk say a wizard to a northern king
At Christmas-tide such wondrous things did show 30
That through one window men beheld the spring,
And through another saw the summer glow,
And through a third the fruited vines arow,
While still, unheard, but in its wonted way,
Piped the drear wind of that December day. 35

So with this Earthly Paradise it is,
If ye will read aright and pardon me,
Who strive to build a shadowy isle of bliss

25. **ivory gate.** In the *Aeneid* of Vergil, VI, 895-896, false dreams are said to leave the gates of Sleep by an ivory portal.

Midmost the beating of the steely sea,
Where tossed about all hearts of men must be; 40
Whose ravening monsters mighty men shall slay,
Not the poor singer of an empty day.

*PROLOGUE: THE WANDERERS

ARGUMENT

Certain gentlemen and mariners of Norway, having considered all that they had heard of the Earthly Paradise, set sail to find it, and after many troubles and the lapse of many years, came, old men, to some western land, of which they had never before heard. There they died when they had dwelt there certain years much honored of the strange people.

THE AUTHOR TO THE READER

Think, listener, that I had the luck to stand,
A while ago within a flowery land,
Fair beyond words; that thence I brought away
Some blossoms that before my footsteps lay,
Not plucked by me, not over-fresh or bright; 5
Yet, since they minded me of that delight,
Within the pages of this book I laid
Their tender petals, therein peace to fade.
Dry are they now, and void of all their scent
And lovely color, yet what once was meant 10
By these dull stains, some men may yet descry
As dead upon the quivering leaves they lie.
Behold them here, and mock me if you will,
But yet believe no scorn of men can kill
My love of that fair land wherefrom they came, 15
Where midst the grass their petals once did flame.

Moreover, since that land as ye should know,
Bears not alone the gems for summer's show,
Or gold and pearls for fresh green-coated spring,

* Much of the Prologue has been omitted here.

Or rich adornment for the flickering wing 20
Of fleeting autumn, but hath little fear
For the white conqueror of the fruitful year,
So in these pages month by month I show
Some portion of the flowers that erst did blow
In lovely meadows of the varying land,
Wherein erewhile I had the luck to stand. 26

MARCH

Slayer of the winter, art thou here again?
O welcome, thou that bring'st the summer nigh!
The bitter wind makes not thy victory vain,
Nor will we mock thee for thy faint blue sky.
Welcome, O March! whose kindly days and dry 5
Make April ready for the throstle's song,
Thou first redresser of the winter's wrong!

Yea, welcome March! and though I die ere June,
Yet for the hope of life I give thee praise,
Striving to swell the burden of the tune 10
That even now I hear thy brown birds raise,
Unmindful of the past or coming days;
Who sing: "O joy! a new year is begun;
What happiness to look upon the sun!"

Ah, what begetteth all this storm of bliss
But Death himself, who crying solemnly, 16
E'en from the heart of sweet Forgetfulness,
Bids us, "Rejoice, lest pleasureless ye die.
Within a little time must ye go by.
Stretch forth your open hands, and while ye live 20
Take all the gifts that Death and Life may give."

6. **throstle**, thrush.

[Connecting link between PROLOGUE and ATALANTA'S RACE]

Behold once more within a quiet land
The remnant of that once aspiring band,
With all hopes fallen away, but such as light
The sons of men to that unfailing night, 25
That death they needs must look on face to face.
Time passed, and ever fell the days apace
From off the new-strung chaplet of their life;
Yet though the time with no bright deeds was rife,
Though no fulfilled desire now made them glad, 30
They were not quite unhappy, rest they had,
And with their hope their fear had passed away;
New things and strange they saw from day to day;
Honored they were, and had no lack of things
For which men crouch before the feet of kings, 35
And, stripped of honor, yet may fail to have.

Therefore their latter journey to the grave
Was like those days of later autumn-tide,
When he who in some town may chance to bide
Opens the windows for the balmy air, 40
And seeing the golden hazy sky so fair,
And from some city garden hearing still
The wheeling rooks the air with music fill,
Sweet hopeful music, thinketh, Is this spring,
Surely the year can scarce be perishing?
But then he leaves the clamor of the town, 46
And sees the withered scanty leaves fall down,
The half-plowed field, the flowerless garden-plot,

28. **chaplet**, coronet or wreath. 29. **rife**, abounding.

The dark full stream by summer long forgot,
The tangled hedges where, relaxed and dead, 50
The twining plants their withered berries shed,
And feels therewith the treachery of the sun,
And knows the pleasant time is well-nigh done.

In such St. Luke's short summer lived these men,
Nearing the goal of threescore years and ten; 55
The elders of the town their comrades were,
And they to them were waxen now as dear
As ancient men to ancient men can be;
Grave matters of belief and polity
They spoke of oft, but not alone of these; 60
For in their times of idleness and ease
They told of poets' vain imaginings,
And memories vague of half-forgotten things,
Not true nor false, but sweet to think upon.

For nigh the time when first that land they won, 65
When newborn March made fresh the hopeful air,
The wanderers sat within a chamber fair,
Guests of that city's rulers, when the day
Far from the sunny noon had fallen away;
The sky grew dark, and on the window-pane 70
They heard the beating of the sudden rain.
Then, all being satisfied with the plenteous feast,
There spoke an ancient man, the land's chief priest,
Who said, "Dear guests, the year begins today,
And fain are we, before it pass away, 75
To hear some tales of that now altered world,

54. **St. Luke's** (day), October 18. The reference is to the period of mild weather which occurs about this time.

Wherefrom our fathers in old time were hurled
By the hard hands of fate and destiny,
Nor would ye hear perchance unwillingly
How we have dealt with stories of the land 80
Wherein the tombs of our forefathers stand;
Wherefore henceforth two solemn feasts shall be
In every month, at which some history
Shall crown our joyance; and this day, indeed,
I have a story ready for our need, 85
If ye will hear it, though perchance it is
That many things therein are writ amiss,
This part forgotten, that part grown too great,
For these things, too, are in the hands of fate."

They cried aloud for joy to hear him speak, 90
And as again the sinking sun did break
Through the dark clouds and blazed adown the hall,
His clear, thin voice upon their ears did fall,
Telling a tale of times long passed away,
When men might cross a kingdom in a day, 95
And kings remembered they should one day die,
And all folk dwelt in great simplicity.

ATALANTA'S RACE

Atalanta, daughter of King Schœneus, not willing to lose her virgin's estate, made it a law to all suitors that they should run a race with her in the public place, and if they failed to overcome her should die unrevenged; and thus many brave men perished. At last came Milanion, the son of Amphidamas, who, outrunning her with the help of Venus, gained the virgin and wedded her.

THROUGH thick Arcadian woods a hunter went,
Following the beasts up, on a fresh spring day;
But since his horn-tipped bow, but seldom bent,
Now at the noontide naught had happed to slay,

Within a vale he called his hounds away,
Hearkening the echoes of his lone voice cling 6
About the cliffs and through the beech-trees ring.

But when they ended, still awhile he stood,
And but the sweet familiar thrush could hear,
And all the day-long noises of the wood,
And o'er the dry leaves of the vanished year 11
His hounds' feet pattering as they drew anear,
And heavy breathing from their heads low hung,
To see the mighty cornel bow unstrung.

Then smiling did he turn to leave the place, 15
But with his first step some new fleeting thought
A shadow cast across his sunburnt face.
I think the golden net that April brought
From some warm world his wavering soul had caught;
For, sunk in vague sweet longing, did he go 20
Betwixt the trees with doubtful steps and slow.

Yet howsoever slow he went, at last
The trees grew sparser, and the wood was done;
Whereon one farewell, backward look he cast,
Then, turning round to see what place was won, 25
With shaded eyes looked underneath the sun,
And o'er green meads and new-turned furrows brown
Beheld the gleaming of King Schœneus' town.

So thitherward he turned, and on each side
The folk were busy on the teeming land, 30
And man and maid from the brown furrows cried,
Or midst the newly blossomed vines did stand,
And as the rustic weapon pressed the hand,
Thought of the nodding of the well-filled ear,
Or how the knife the heavy bunch should shear. 35

Merry it was: about him sung the birds,
The spring flowers bloomed along the firm dry road,
The sleek-skinned mothers of the sharp-horned herds
Now for the barefoot milking-maidens lowed;
While from the freshness of his blue abode, 40
Glad his death-bearing arrows to forget,
The broad sun blazed, nor scattered plagues as yet.

Through such fair things unto the gates he came,
And found them open, as though peace were there;
Where through, unquestioned of his race or name, 45
He entered, and along the streets 'gan fare,
Which at the first of folk were well-nigh bare;
But pressing on, and going more hastily,
Men hurrying, too, he 'gan at last to see.

Following the last of these, he still pressed on, 50
Until an open space he came unto,
Where wreaths of fame had oft been lost and won,
For feats of strength folk there were wont to do.
And now our hunter looked for something new,
Because the whole wide space was bare, and stilled 55
The high seats were, with eager people filled.

There with the others to a seat he gat,
Whence he beheld a broidered canopy,

14. **cornel**, one of a family of hard-wood trees of which the dogwood is a conspicuous member.

42. **The broad sun**, etc. It was an ancient superstition that the midsummer sun brought plagues upon the earth.

'Neath which in fair array King Schœneus sat
Upon his throne with councilors thereby; 60
And underneath his well-wrought seat and high,
He saw a golden image of the sun,
A silver image of the fleet-foot one.

A brazen altar stood beneath their feet
Whereon a thin flame flickered in the wind; 65
Nigh this a herald clad in raiment meet
Made ready even now his horn to wind,
By whom a huge man held a sword, entwined
With yellow flowers; these stood a little space
From off the altar, nigh the starting-place. 70

And there two runners did the sign abide,
Foot set to foot—a young man slim and fair,
Crisp-haired, well-knit, with firm limbs often tried
In places where no man his strength may spare;
Dainty his thin coat was, and on his hair
A golden circlet of renown he wore, 76
And in his hand an olive garland bore.

But on this day with whom shall he contend?
A maid stood by him like Diana clad
When in the woods she lists her bow to bend, 80
Too fair for one to look on and be glad,
Who scarcely yet has thirty summers had,
If he must still behold her from afar;
Too fair to let the world live free from war.

She seemed all earthly matters to forget;
Of all tormenting lines her face was clear, 86
Her wide gray eyes upon the goal were set
Calm and unmoved as though no soul were near.
But her foe trembled as a man in fear,
Nor from her loveliness one moment turned 90
His anxious face with fierce desire that burned.

Now through the hush there broke the trumpet's clang
Just as the setting sun made eventide.
Then from light feet a spurt of dust there sprang,
And swiftly were they running side by side; 95
But silent did the thronging folk abide
Until the turning-post was reached at last,
And round about it still abreast they passed.

But when the people saw how close they ran,
When halfway to the starting-point they were, 100
A cry of joy broke forth, whereat the man
Headed the white-foot runner, and drew near
Unto the very end of all his fear;
And scarce his straining feet the ground could feel,
And bliss unhoped-for o'er his heart 'gan steal. 105

But midst the loud, victorious shouts he heard
Her footsteps drawing nearer, and the sound
Of fluttering raiment, and thereat, afeared,
His flushed and eager face he turned around,
And even then he felt her past him bound 110
Fleet as the wind, but scarcely saw her there
Till on the goal she laid her fingers fair.

There stood she breathing like a little child
Amid some warlike clamor laid asleep,
For no victorious joy her red lips smiled.

63. **fleet-foot one**, Diana or the Grecian Artemis, the virgin goddess of hunting, of the woods, and of the moon. 77. **olive garland**, in token of his peaceful purpose. 79. **Diana.** See note above line 63.

Her cheek its wonted freshness did but keep;
No glance lit up her clear gray eyes and deep,
Though some divine thought softened all her face
As once more rang the trumpet through the place.

But her late foe stopped short amidst his course,
One moment gazed upon her piteously,
Then with a groan his lingering feet did force
To leave the spot whence he her eyes could see;
And, changed like one who knows his time must be
But short and bitter, without any word
He knelt before the bearer of the sword;

Then high rose up the gleaming, deadly blade,
Bared of its flowers, and through the crowded place
Was silence now, and midst of it the maid
Went by the poor wretch at a gentle pace,
And he to hers upturned his sad white face;
Nor did his eyes behold another sight
Ere on his soul there fell eternal night.

So was the pageant ended, and all folk
Talking of this and that familiar thing
In little groups from that sad concourse broke;
For now the shrill bats were upon the wing,
And soon dark night would slay the evening,
And in dark gardens sang the nightingale
Her little-heeded, oft-repeated tale.
And with the last of all the hunter went,
Who, wondering at the strange sight he had seen,
Prayed an old man to tell him what it meant,
Both why the vanquished man so slain had been,
And if the maiden were an earthly queen,
Or rather what much more she seemed to be,
No sharer in the world's mortality.

"Stranger," said he, "I pray she soon may die
Whose lovely youth has slain so many a one!
King Schœneus' daughter is she verily,
Who when her eyes first looked upon the sun
Was fain to end her life but new begun,
For he had vowed to leave but men alone
Sprung from his loins when he from earth was gone.

"Therefore he bade one leave her in the wood,
And let wild things deal with her as they might;
But this being done, some cruel god thought good
To save her beauty in the world's despite.
Folk say that her, so delicate and white
As now she is, a rough, root-grubbing bear
Amidst her shapeless cubs at first did rear.

"In course of time the woodfolk slew her nurse,
And to their rude abode the youngling brought,
And reared her up to be a kingdom's curse,
Who, grown a woman, of no kingdom thought,
But armed and swift, mid beasts destruction wrought,
Nor spared two shaggy centaur kings to slay,
To whom her body seemed an easy prey.

"So to this city, led by fate, she came,
Whom, known by signs, whereof I cannot tell,
King Schœneus for his child at last did claim;
Nor otherwhere since that day doth she dwell,

Sending too many a noble soul to hell.—
What! thine eyes glisten! what then! thinkest thou
Her shining head unto the yoke to bow? 175

"Listen, my son, and love some other maid,
For she the saffron gown will never wear,
And on no flower-strewn couch shall she be laid,
Nor shall her voice make glad a lover's ear;
Yet if of Death thou hast not any fear,
Yea, rather, if thou lovest him utterly,
Thou still may'st woo her ere thou com'st to die, 182

"Like him that on this day thou sawest lie dead;
For, fearing as I deem the sea-born one,
The maid has vowed e'en such a man to wed 185
As in the course her swift feet can outrun;
But whoso fails herein, his days are done.
He came the nighest that was slain today,
Although with him I deem she did but play.

"Behold, such mercy Atalanta gives 190
To those that long to win her loveliness;
Be wise! be sure that many a maid there lives
Gentler than she, of beauty little less,
Whose swimming eyes thy loving words shall bless,
When in some garden, knee set close to knee, 195
Thou sing'st the song that love may teach to thee."

So to the hunter spake that ancient man,
And left him for his own home presently;
But he turned round, and through the moonlight wan
Reached the thick wood, and there 'twixt tree and tree 200
Distraught he passed the long night feverishly,
'Twixt sleep and waking, and at dawn arose
To wage hot war against his speechless foes.

There to the hart's flank seemed his shaft to grow,
As panting down the broad, green glades he flew, 205
There by his horn the dryads well might know
His thrust against the bear's heart had been true,
And there Adonis' bane his javelin slew;
But still in vain through rough and smooth he went,
For none the more his restlessness was spent. 210

So wandering, he to Argive cities came,
And in the lists with valiant men he stood,
And by great deeds he won him praise and fame,
And heaps of wealth for little-valued blood;
But none of all these things, or life, seemed good 215
Unto his heart, where still unsatisfied
A ravenous longing warred with fear and pride.

Therefore it happed when but a month had gone
Since he had left King Schœneus' city old,
In hunting-gear, again, again alone, 220
The forest-bordered meads did he behold,
Where still mid thoughts of August's quivering gold
Folk hoed the wheat, and clipped the vine in trust
Of faint October's purple-foaming must.

And once again he passed the peaceful gate, 225
While to his beating heart his lips did lie,
That, owning not victorious love and fate,

177. **saffron**, the color used for Greek bridal robes. 184. **sea-born one**, Venus, who was born from the sea.

206. **dryads**, wood-nymphs whose individual lives are bound up with the life of a tree. 208. **Adonis.** He was killed by a wild boar. 211. **Argive.** Argolis was a kingdom on the northeast shore of the Grecian Peloponnesus. 224. **must**, unfermented grape juice. 227. **owning**, confessing.

Said, half aloud, "And here, too, must I try
To win of alien men the mastery,
And gather for my head fresh meed of fame, 230
And cast new glory on my father's name."

In spite of that, how beat his heart when first
Folk said to him, "And art thou come to see
That which still makes our city's name accurst
Among all mothers for its cruelty? 235
Then know indeed that fate is good to thee,
Because tomorrow a new luckless one
Against the white-foot maid is pledged to run."

So on the morrow with no curious eyes,
As once he did, that piteous sight he saw, 240
Nor did that wonder in his heart arise
As toward the goal the conquering maid 'gan draw,
Nor did he gaze upon her eyes with awe—
Too full the pain of longing filled his heart
For fear or wonder there to have a part.

But oh, how long the night was ere it went! 246
How long it was before the dawn begun
Showed to the wakening birds the sun's intent
That not in darkness should the world be done!
And then, and then, how long before the sun 250
Bade silently the toilers of the earth
Get forth to fruitless cares or empty mirth!

And long it seemed that in the market-place
He stood and saw the chaffering folk go by,
Ere from the ivory throne King Schœneus' face 255
Looked down upon the murmur royally;

254. **chaffering**, trading, bargaining.

But then came trembling that the time was nigh
When he midst pitying looks his love must claim,
And jeering voices must salute his name

But as the throng he pierced to gain the throne, 260
His alien face distraught and anxious told
What hopeless errand he was bound upon,
And, each to each, folk whispered to behold
His godlike limbs; nay, and one woman old,
As he went by, must pluck him by the sleeve 265
And pray him yet that wretched love to leave.

For sidling up she said, "Canst thou live twice,
Fair son? Canst thou have joyful youth again,
That thus thou goest to the sacrifice,
Thyself the victim? Nay, then, all in vain 270
Thy mother bore her longing and her pain,
And one more maiden on the earth must dwell
Hopeless of joy, nor fearing death and hell.

"O fool, thou knowest not the compact then
That with the three-formed goddess she has made 275
To keep her from the loving lips of men,
And in no saffron gown to be arrayed,
And therewithal with glory to be paid,
And love of her the moonlit river sees
White 'gainst the shadow of the formless trees. 280

"Come back, and I myself will pray for thee
Unto the sea-born framer of delights,
To give thee her who on the earth may be

275. **three-formed goddess.** Diana was the goddess of chastity, and protected nature and wild animal life. She was also the goddess of childbirth. She has been identified with the moon and Hecate. 282. **sea-born framer.** Venus; cf. line 184.

The fairest stirrer-up to death and fights,
To quench with hopeful days and joyous nights 285
The flame that doth thy youthful heart consume—
Come back, nor give thy beauty to the tomb."

How should he listen to her earnest speech—
Words such as he not once or twice had said
Unto himself, whose meaning scarce could reach 290
The firm abode of that sad hardihead?
He turned about, and through the marketstead
Swiftly he passed, until before the throne
In the cleared space he stood at last alone.

Then said the King, "Stranger, what dost thou here? 295
Have any of my folk done ill to thee?
Or art thou of the forest men in fear?
Or art thou of the sad fraternity
Who still will strive my daughter's mate to be, 299
Staking their lives to win to earthly bliss
The lonely maid, the friend of Artemis?"

"O King," he said, "thou sayest the word indeed;
Nor will I quit the strife till I have won
My sweet delight, or death to end my need.
And know that I am called Milanion, 305
Of King Amphidamas the well-loved son;
So fear not that to thy old name, O King,
Much loss or shame my victory will bring."

"Nay, Prince," said Schœneus, "welcome to this land
Thou wert indeed, if thou wert here to try
Thy strength 'gainst someone mighty of his hand; 311
Nor would we grudge thee well-won mastery.
But now, why wilt thou come to me to die,
And at my door lay down thy luckless head,
Swelling the band of the unhappy dead,

"Whose curses even now my heart doth fear? 316
Lo, I am old, and know what life can be,
And what a bitter thing is death anear.
O son! be wise, and hearken unto me;
And if no other can be dear to thee, 320
At least as now, yet is the world full wide,
And bliss in seeming hopeless hearts may hide—

"But if thou losest life, then all is lost."
"Nay, King," Milanion said, "thy words are vain.
Doubt not that I have counted well the cost. 325
But say, on what day wilt thou that I gain
Fulfilled delight, or death to end my pain?
Right glad were I if it could be today,
And all my doubts at rest forever lay."

"Nay," said King Schœneus, "thus it shall not be, 330
But rather shalt thou let a month go by,
And weary with thy prayers for victory
What god thou know'st the kindest and most nigh.
So doing, still perchance thou shalt not die;
And with my good-will wouldst thou have the maid, 335
For of the equal gods I grow afraid.

"And until then, O Prince, be thou my guest,
And all these troublous things awhile forget."
"Nay," said he, "couldst thou give my soul good rest,
And on mine head a sleepy garland set, 340
Then had I 'scaped the meshes of the net,
Nor shouldst thou hear from me another word;
But now, make sharp thy fearful heading sword.

336. **equal**, just. 340. **sleepy garland**, made of poppies. 343. **heading**, beheading.

"Yet will I do what son of man may do,
And promise all the gods may most desire, 345
That to myself I may at least be true;
And on that day my heart and limbs so tire,
With utmost strain and measureless desire,
That, at the worst, I may but fall asleep
When in the sunlight round that sword shall sweep." 350

He went with that, nor anywhere would bide,
But unto Argos restlessly did wend;
And there, as one who lays all hope aside,
Because the leech has said his life must end, 354
Silent farewell he bade to foe and friend,
And took his way unto the restless sea,
For there he deemed his rest and help might be.

Upon the shore of Argolis there stands
A temple to the goddess that he sought,
That, turned unto the lion-bearing lands, 360
Fenced from the east, of cold winds hath no thought,
Though to no homestead there the sheaves are brought,
No groaning press torments the close-clipped murk,
Lonely the fane stands, far from all men's work.

Pass through a close, set thick with myrtle trees, 365
Through the brass doors that guard the holy place,
And, entering, hear the washing of the seas
That twice a day rise high above the base,
And, with the southwest urging them, embrace
The marble feet of her that standeth there, 370
That shrink not, naked though they be and fair.

352. **Argos**, the chief city of Argolis. 363. **murk**, what is left of the grape mash after the juice has been extracted. 364. **fane**, temple inclosure.

Small is the fane through which the sea-wind sings
About Queen Venus' well-wrought image white;
But hung around are many precious things,
The gifts of those who, longing for delight, 375
Have hung them there within the goddess' sight,
And in return have taken at her hands
The living treasures of the Grecian lands.

And thither now has come Milanion,
And showed unto the priests' wide-open eyes 380
Gifts fairer than all those that there have shone—
Silk cloths, inwrought with Indian fantasies,
And bowls inscribed with sayings of the wise
Above the deeds of foolish living things,
And mirrors fit to be the gifts of kings. 385

And now before the sea-born one he stands,
By the sweet veiling smoke made dim and soft;
And while the incense trickles from his hands,
And while the odorous smoke-wreaths hang aloft,
Thus doth he pray to her: "O thou who oft 390
Hast holpen man and maid in their distress,
Despise me not for this my wretchedness!

"O goddess, among us who dwell below,
Kings and great men, great for a little while,
Have pity on the lowly heads that bow, 395
Nor hate the hearts that love them without guile;
Wilt thou be worse than these, and is thy smile
A vain device of him who set thee here,
An empty dream of some artificer?

382. **Indian**, Eastern.

"O great one, some men love, and are ashamed;
Some men are weary of the bonds of love;
Yea, and by some men lightly art thou blamed,
That from thy toils their lives they cannot move,
And 'mid the ranks of men their manhood prove.
Alas! O goddess, if thou slayest me
What new immortal can I serve but thee?

"Think then, will it bring honor to thy head
If folk say, 'Everything aside he cast,
And to all fame and honor was he dead,
And to his one hope now is dead at last,
Since all unholpen he is gone and past.
Ah! the gods love not man, for certainly
He to his helper did not cease to cry.'

"Nay, but thou wilt help; they who died before
Not single-hearted, as I deem, came here;
Therefore unthanked they laid their gifts before
Thy stainless feet, still shivering with their fear,
Lest in their eyes their true thought might appear,
Who sought to be the lords of that fair town,
Dreaded of men and winners of renown.

"O Queen, thou knowest I pray not for this;
Oh, set us down together in some place
Where not a voice can break our heaven of bliss,
Where naught but rocks and I can see her face,
Softening beneath the marvel of thy grace,
Where not a foot our vanished steps can track—
The golden age, the golden age come back!

"O fairest, hear me now who do thy will,
Plead for thy rebel that she be not slain,
But live and love and be thy servant still.
Ah! give her joy and take away my pain,
And thus two long-enduring servants gain.
An easy thing this is to do for me,
What need of my vain words to weary thee!

"But none the less this place will I not leave
Until I needs must go my death to meet,
Or at thy hands some happy sign receive
That in great joy we twain may one day greet
Thy presence here and kiss thy silver feet,
Such as we deem thee, fair beyond all words,
Victorious o'er our servants and our lords."

Then from the altar back a space he drew,
But from the Queen turned not his face away,
But 'gainst a pillar leaned, until the blue
That arched the sky, at ending of the day,
Was turned to ruddy gold and changing gray,
And clear, but low, the nigh-ebbed windless sea
In the still evening murmured ceaselessly.

And there he stood when all the sun was down;
Nor had he moved when the dim golden light,
Like the far luster of a godlike town,
Had left the world to seeming hopeless night;
Nor would he move the more when wan moonlight
Streamed through the pillars for a little while,
And lighted up the white Queen's changeless smile.

Naught noted he the shallow, flowing sea,
As step by step it set the wrack a-swim;

411. **unholpen**, unhelped.

457. **wrack**, the drifted material cast up on the shore by the sea.

The yellow torchlight nothing noted he
Wherein with fluttering gown and half-bared limb
The temple damsels sung their midnight hymn; 460
And naught the doubled stillness of the fane
When they were gone and all was hushed again.

But when the waves had touched the marble base,
And steps the fish swim over twice a day,
The dawn beheld him sunken in his place 465
Upon the floor; and sleeping there he lay,
Not heeding aught the little jets of spray
The roughened sea brought nigh, across him cast,
For as one dead all thought from him had passed.

Yet long before the sun had showed his head, 470
Long ere the varied hangings on the wall
Had gained once more their blue and green and red,
He rose as one some well-known sign doth call
When war upon the city's gates doth fall,
And scarce like one fresh risen out of sleep, 475
He 'gan again his broken watch to keep.

Then he turned round; not for the sea-gull's cry
That wheeled above the temple in his flight,
Not for the fresh south wind that lovingly
Breathed on the newborn day and dying night, 480
But some strange hope 'twixt fear and great delight
Drew round his face, now flushed, now pale and wan,
And still constrained his eyes the sea to scan.

Now a faint light lit up the southern sky—
Not sun nor moon, for all the world was gray, 485
But this a bright cloud seemed, that drew anigh,
Lighting the dull waves that beneath it lay
As toward the temple still it took its way,
And still grew greater, till Milanion
Saw naught for dazzling light that round him shone. 490

But as he staggered with his arms outspread,
Delicious, unnamed odors breathed around;
For languid happiness he bowed his head,
And with wet eyes sank down upon the ground,
Nor wished for aught, nor any dream he found 495
To give him reason for that happiness,
Or make him ask more knowledge of his bliss.

At last his eyes were cleared, and he could see
Through happy tears the goddess face to face
With that faint image of divinity, 500
Whose well-wrought smile and dainty changeless grace
Until that morn so gladdened all the place;
Then he unwitting cried aloud her name,
And covered up his eyes for fear and shame.

But through the stillness he her voice could hear, 505
Piercing his heart with joy scarce bearable,
That said, "Milanion, wherefore dost thou fear?
I am not hard to those who love me well;
List to what I a second time will tell,
And thou mayest hear perchance, and live to save 510
The cruel maiden from a loveless grave.

"See, by my feet three golden apples lie—
Such fruit among the heavy roses falls,
Such fruit my watchful damsels carefully
Store up within the best-loved of my walls, 515

Ancient Damascus, where the lover calls
Above my unseen head, and faint and light
The rose-leaves flutter round me in the night.

"And note that these are not alone most fair
With heavenly gold, but longing strange they bring 520
Unto the hearts of men, who will not care,
Beholding these, for any once-loved thing
Till round the shining sides their fingers cling.
And thou shalt see thy well-girt, swift-foot maid
By sight of these amidst her glory stayed.

"For bearing these within a scrip with thee, 526
When first she heads thee from the starting place,
Cast down the first one for her eyes to see,
And when she turns aside, make on apace,
And if again she heads thee in the race, 530
Spare not the other two to cast aside
If she not long enough behind will bide.

"Farewell, and when has come the happy time
That she Diana's raiment must unbind,
And all the world seems blest with Saturn's clime, 535
And thou with eager arms about her twined
Beholdest first her gray eyes growing kind,
Surely, O trembler, thou shalt scarcely then
Forget the helper of unhappy men."

Milanion raised his head at this last word, 540
For now so soft and kind she seemed to be
No longer of her godhead was he feared;
Too late he looked, for nothing could he see
But the white image glimmering doubtfully
In the departing twilight cold and gray, 545
And those three apples on the steps that lay.

These then he caught up, quivering with delight,
Yet fearful lest it all might be a dream,
And though aweary with the watchful night,
And sleepless nights of longing, still did deem 550
He could not sleep; but yet the first sunbeam
That smote the fane across the heaving deep
Shone on him laid in calm, untroubled sleep.

But little ere the noontide did he rise,
And why he felt so happy scarce could tell 555
Until the gleaming apples met his eyes.
Then, leaving the fair place where this befell,
Oft he looked back as one who loved it well,
Then homeward to the haunts of men 'gan wend
To bring all things unto a happy end. 560

Now has the lingering month at last gone by;
Again are all folk round the running-place.
Nor other seems the dismal pageantry
Than heretofore, but that another face
Looks o'er the smooth course ready for the race, 565
For now, beheld of all, Milanion
Stands on the spot he twice has looked upon.

516. **Damascus**, in Syria, where there was an ancient cult of Venus. 526. **scrip**, wallet. 535. **Saturn's clime**, the golden age of primitive happiness.

But yet—what change is this that holds the maid?
Does she indeed see in his glittering eye
More than disdain of the sharp shearing blade, 570
Some happy hope of help and victory?
The others seemed to say, "We come to die;
Look down upon us for a little while,
That, dead, we may bethink us of thy smile."

But he—what look of mastery was this 575
He cast on her? Why were his lips so red?
Why was his face so flushed with happiness?
So looks not one who deems himself but dead,
E'en if to death he bows a willing head;
So rather looks a god well pleased to find
Some earthly damsel fashioned to his mind. 581

Why must she drop her lids before his gaze,
And even as she casts adown her eyes
Redden to note his eager glance of praise,
And wish that she were clad in other guise? 585
Why must the memory to her heart arise
Of things unnoticed when they first were heard,
Some lover's song, some answering maiden's word?

What makes these longings, vague, without a name,
And this vain pity never felt before, 590
This sudden languor, this contempt of fame,
This tender sorrow for the time past o'er,
These doubts that grow each minute more and more?
Why does she tremble as the time grows near,
And weak defeat and woeful victory fear? 595

But while she seemed to hear her beating heart,
Above their heads the trumpet blast rang out,
And forth they sprang; and she must play her part.
Then flew her white feet, knowing not a doubt,
Though, slackening once, she turned her head about, 600
But then she cried aloud and faster fled
Than e'er before, and all men deemed him dead.

But with no sound he raised aloft his hand
And thence what seemed a ray of light there flew
And past the maid rolled on along the sand; 605
Then trembling she her feet together drew,
And in her heart a strong desire there grew
To have the toy; some god she thought had given
That gift to her, to make of earth a heaven.

Then from the course with eager steps she ran, 610
And in her odorous bosom laid the gold.
But when she turned again, the great-limbed man
Now well ahead she failed not to behold,
And, mindful of her glory waxing cold,
Sprang up and followed him in hot pursuit, 615
Though with one hand she touched the golden fruit.

Note, too, the bow that she was wont to bear
She laid aside to grasp the glittering prize,
And o'er her shoulder from the quiver fair
Three arrows fell and lay before her eyes 620
Unnoticed, as amidst the people's cries
She sprang to head the strong Milanion,
Who now the turning-post had well-nigh won.

But as he set his mighty hand on it,
White fingers underneath his own were laid, 625
And white limbs from his dazzled eyes did flit;
Then he the second fruit cast by the maid,
She ran awhile, and then as one afraid
Wavered and stopped, and turned and made no stay, 629
Until the globe with its bright fellow lay.

Then, as a troubled glance she cast around,
Now far ahead the Argive could she see,
And in her garment's hem one hand she wound
To keep the double prize, and strenuously
Sped o'er the course, and little doubt had she 635
To win the day, though now but scanty space
Was left betwixt him and the winning-place.

Short was the way unto such wingéd feet;
Quickly she gained upon him, till at last
He turned about her eager eyes to meet 640
And from his hand the third fair apple cast.
She wavered not, but turned and ran so fast
After the prize that should her bliss fulfill,
That in her hand it lay ere it was still.

Nor did she rest, but turned about to win
Once more an unblest, woeful victory— 646
And yet—and yet—why does her breath begin
To fail her, and her feet drag heavily?
Why fails she now to see if far or nigh
The goal is? Why do her gray eyes grow dim? 650
Why do these tremors run through every limb?

She spreads her arms abroad some stay to find,
Else must she fall, indeed, and findeth this,
A strong man's arms about her body twined.
Nor may she shudder now to feel his kiss, 655
So wrapped she is in new, unbroken bliss;
Made happy that the foe the prize hath won,
She weeps glad tears for all her glory done.

SHATTER the trumpet, hew adown the posts!
Upon the brazen altar break the sword, 660
And scatter incense to appease the ghosts
Of those who died here by their own award.
Bring forth the image of the mighty lord,
And her who unseen o'er the runners hung,
And did a deed forever to be sung. 665

Here are the gathered folk; make no delay;
Open King Schœneus' well-filled treasury,
Bring out the gifts long hid from light of day—
The golden bowls o'erwrought with imagery,
Gold chains, and unguents brought from over sea, 670
The saffron gown the old Phœnician brought,
Within the temple of the goddess wrought.

O ye, O damsels, who shall never see
Her, that Love's servant bringeth now to you,
Returning from another victory, 675
In some cool bower do all that now is due!
Since she in token of her service new
Shall give to Venus offerings rich enow—
Her maiden zone, her arrows, and her bow. (1868)

663. **mighty lord**, Jupiter. 664. **her**, Venus. 674. **servant**, Milanion.

ROBERT BROWNING (1812-1889)

General Note

Twenty-five years after he had written *Sordello* (1840) Robert Browning reprinted it with a dedication to a friend, in which he revealed concisely the object of all his poetry. "The historical decoration was purposely of no more importance than a background requires; and my stress lay on the incidents in the development of a soul. Little else is worth study. I, at least, always thought so; you, with many known and unknown to me, think so; others may one day think so; and whether my attempt remain for them or not, I trust, though away and past it, to continue ever yours, R. B." The entire energy of the poet throughout his life was spent in striving to explain the development of human souls and in discovering the medium best suited for its expression. The cry of the Anglo-Saxon, "Fate goes where it will," or "A man must meet his fate," is answered here in a ringing note of aspiration, "Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a heaven for?"

Browning gloried in the physical vigor of manhood, in the emotional and spiritual mysteries of life, and in the ardor of the search for the final explanation of life, of whose ultimate success he felt sure. But Browning mirrored the search as dramatized in the lives of others, and sought as the subjects of his poems revealing situations, especially the crucial situations in the life of an individual, which lay bare not merely a personal truth, but a universal truth as well. Therefore he developed as the proper medium for his poetry the dramatic monologue, in which the speaker consciously or unconsciously reveals himself as he tells his story. The following poems indicate Browning's preference for subjects connected with the past, especially with the Renaissance, and his development of the dramatic monologue.

MY LAST DUCHESS

Note

With admirable compression, Browning reveals the character and married life of an Italian duke of the Renaissance, as he shows his art treasures to the envoy of the count whose daughter he intends next to marry. While the duke pauses before the portrait of his late wife, he not only appreciates it as a work of art, but discourses, not without purpose, as to the errors of the former duchess, which brought about the termination of her career.

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now. Fra Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will't please you sit and look at her? I said 5
"Fra Pandolf" by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned—since none puts by 9
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I—
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
Her husband's presence only called that spot 14
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek. Perhaps
Fra Pandolf chanced to say, "Her mantle laps
Over my lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat"; such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough 20
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart—how shall I say?—too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 'twas all one! My favor at her breast, 25
The dropping of the daylight in the west,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace—all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech, 30
Or blush, at least. She thanked men—good! but thanked
Somehow—I know not how—as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame 34
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill

3. **Fra**, brother, a title of a monk or friar. Fra Pandolf is an imaginary artist. Much of the painting in the early Renaissance was done by ecclesiastics.

In speech—which I have not—to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed, the mark"—and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set 40
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
—E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose
Never to stoop. Oh, sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands; 45
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretense 50
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity, 55
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me! (1843)

56. **Claus of Innsbruck**, also an imaginary artist. Much excellent work in bronze was done at Innsbruck in the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance.

THE BISHOP ORDERS HIS TOMB AT ST. PRAXED'S CHURCH

Rome, 15—

Note

The sixteenth century in Italy was the apex of the Renaissance. To it belong Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Michael Angelo, and Titian. In Rome, where the scene of the poem is laid, Raphael painted his supreme frescoes for the Vatican, and Michael Angelo designed St. Peter's, worked on the tomb of Pope Julius II, and painted the great frescoes in the Sistine Chapel. It was a century of amazing fusions of apparent opposites, especially of pagan and Christian civilizations. Art concerned itself rather impartially with the sacred and the profane, without much thought of keeping them apart. Thus the Bishop, who is a figment of Browning's imagination, sees no impropriety in combining as decorations for his tomb, himself in the attitude of God the Father judging the world, Christ in a glory, and a pagan scene of drunken sensual revelry between nymphs and satyrs, for morals at this time were confused as well as art. Pagan and priest were mingled in him with superb inconsequence.

Vanity, saith the preacher, vanity!
Draw round my bed; is Anselm keeping back?
Nephews—sons mine . . . ah God, I know not! Well—
She, men would have to be your mother once,
Old Gandolf envied me, so fair she was! 5
What's done is done, and she is dead beside,
Dead long ago, and I am Bishop since,
And as she died so must we die ourselves,
And thence ye may perceive the world's a dream.
Life, how and what is it? As here I lie 10
In this state-chamber, dying by degrees,
Hours and long hours in the dead night, I ask,
"Do I live; am I dead?" Peace, peace seems all.
St. Praxed's ever was the church for peace;
And so, about this tomb of mine. I fought 15
With tooth and nail to save my niche, ye know.
—Old Gandolf cozened me, despite my care;

Title. **tomb.** One phase in the development of Renaissance sculpture was concerned with tombs. From a simple slab in the floor of the church upon which was written the name of the deceased, the tomb became a complicated structure, including first a bier decorated with an ornamental frieze and many bas-reliefs, surmounted by an image of the deceased, either recumbent or seated on a throne; second, a triptych—a painting or carving in three juxtaposed panels—on the wall back of the bier, either painted or sculptured; and third, an ornamental canopy or tabernacle. **St. Praxed's.** This is a small and ancient Roman church, dating from the fifth century, built in honor of the virgin saint Praxedes, daughter of a Roman senator, who gave her riches to the poor. She lived in the second century. 1. **Vanity**, etc., Eccles., i, 2. The Bishop is giving his verdict on life, and in a quasi-delirium, imagines himself at first as preaching a sermon. 17. **cozened**, cheated.

Shrewd was that snatch from out the corner south
He graced his carrion with, God curse the same!
Yet still my niche is not so cramped but thence 20
One sees the pulpit o' the epistle-side,
And somewhat of the choir, those silent seats,
And up into the aëry dome where live
The angels, and a sunbeam's sure to lurk.
And I shall fill my slab of basalt there, 25
And 'neath my tabernacle take my rest,
With those nine columns round me, two and two,
The odd one at my feet where Anselm stands,
Peach-blossom marble all, the rare, the ripe,
As fresh-poured red wine of a mighty pulse. 30
—Old Gandolf with his paltry onion-stone,
Put me where I may look at him! True peach,
Rosy and flawless; how I earned the prize!
Draw close. That conflagration of my church
—What then? So much was saved if aught were missed! 35
My sons, ye would not be my death? Go dig
The white-grape vineyard where the oil-press stood,
Drop water gently till the surface sinks,
And if ye find . . . ah God, I know not, I! . . .
Bedded in store of rotten fig-leaves soft, 40
And corded up in a tight olive-frail,
Some lump, ah God, of *lapis lazuli*,
Big as a Jew's head cut off at the nape,
Blue as a vein o'er the Madonna's breast—
Sons, all have I bequeathed you, villas, all, 45
That brave Frascati villa with its bath—
So, let the blue lump poise between my knees,
Like God the Father's globe on both his hands
Ye worship in the Jesu Church so gay,
For Gandolf shall not choose but see and burst! 50
Swift as a weaver's shuttle fleet our years;
Man goeth to the grave, and where is he?
Did I say basalt for my slab, sons? Black—
'Twas ever antique-black I meant! How else
Shall ye contrast my frieze to come beneath? 55
The bas-relief in bronze ye promised me,
Those Pans and Nymphs ye wot of, and perchance
Some tripod, thyrsus, with a vase or so,
The Savior at his sermon on the mount,
St. Praxed in a glory, and one Pan 60
Ready to twitch the Nymph's last garment off,
And Moses with the tables . . . but I know
Ye mark me not! What do they whisper thee,
Child of my bowels, Anselm? Ah, ye hope
To revel down my villas while I gasp 65
Bricked o'er with beggar's moldy travertine

21. **epistle-side**, the right-hand side of the altar as one faces it. The Bishop wished to reserve for his tomb a niche in a bay of the church aisle which looked directly upon the altar and would be observed because it was near the crossing of the nave and transepts. The dome rose above the crossing of the nave and transepts, while beyond the crossing in continuation of the nave was the apse, containing the altar and the choir. 25. **basalt**, a black trap-rock used in slabs to give contrast to lighter colored marbles. 31. **onion-stone**, Cipollino; an Italian greenish-white marble which appears to have many coats, like an onion. The Bishop did not object to its looks as much as to its cheapness and widespread use. 41. **olive-frail**, a basket, usually woven of rushes in which olives were stored. 42. **lapis lazuli**, a stone of deep and vivid blue color.

46. **Frascati**, a town near Rome, situated in the Alban hills, where wealthy Romans had villas to which they retired to avoid the heat and bustle of the capital. 49. **Jesu Church**, a church in Rome containing over the altar of St. Ignatius a group such as the Bishop wished to have copied for his tomb. 51. **Swift as**, etc., Job, viii, 6. The Bishop returns momentarily to his sermon. 54. **antique-black**, Nero-antico, a much finer stone than basalt. 56 ff. **The bas-relief**, etc. These lines show the spirit of Renaissance art. 57. **Pans and Nymphs**, a Bacchic revel such as appeared on Greek vases and in latter Greek sculpture. 58. **tripod**, a three-legged stool placed over the volcanic cleft at Delphi, upon which the priestess sat to receive the message of the god. Hence the tripod is a pagan sign of divine inspiration. **thyrsus**, the staff of Bacchus and his followers. It was crowned with a pine cone, and wreathed with ivy. **vase**. The Romans made magnificent vases of marble, which were used decoratively in the Renaissance. 60. **Pan**, the Greek god of farm and woodland. He had goat's legs and sometimes goat's horns and ears. 66. **travertine**, a cheap limestone from Tivoli, which is at first white, but soon becomes a dingy gray, absorbs moisture, and presents a very unlovely appearance.

Which Gandolf from his tomb-top chuckles at!
Nay, boys, ye love me—all of jasper, then!
'Tis jasper ye stand pledged to, lest I grieve
My bath must needs be left behind, alas! 70
One block, pure green as a pistachio-nut,
There's plenty jasper somewhere in the world—
And have I not St. Praxed's ear to pray
Horses for ye, and brown Greek manuscripts,
And mistresses with great smooth marbly limbs? 75
—That's if ye carve my epitaph aright,
Choice Latin, picked phrase, Tully's every word,
No gaudy ware like Gandolf's second line—
Tully, my masters? Ulpian serves his need!
And then how I shall lie through centuries, 80
And hear the blessed mutter of the Mass,
And see God made and eaten all day long,
And feel the steady candle-flame, and taste
Good strong, thick, stupefying incense-smoke!
For as I lie here, hours of the dead night, 85
Dying in state and by such slow degrees,
I fold my arms as if they clasped a crook,
And stretch my feet forth straight as stone can point,
And let the bedclothes for a mort-cloth drop
Into great laps and folds of sculptor's-work. 90
And as yon tapers dwindle, and strange thoughts
Grow, with a certain humming in my ears,
About the life before I lived this life,
And this life too, popes, cardinals, and priests,
St. Praxed at his sermon on the mount, 95
Your tall pale mother with her talking eyes,
And new-found agate urns as fresh as day,
And marble's language, Latin pure, discreet,
—Aha, ELUCESCEBAT quoth our friend?
No Tully, said I, Ulpian at the best! 100
Evil and brief hath been my pilgrimage.
All *lapis*, all, sons! Else I give the Pope
My villas. Will ye ever eat my heart?
Ever your eyes were as a lizard's quick;
They glitter like your mother's for my soul, 105
Or ye would heighten my impoverished frieze,
Piece out its starved design, and fill my vase
With grapes, and add a vizor and a Term,
And to the tripod ye would tie a lynx
That in his struggle throws the thyrsus down, 110
To comfort me on my entablature
Whereon I am to lie till I must ask
"Do I live, am I dead?" There, leave me, there!
For ye have stabbed me with ingratitude
To death—ye wish it—God, ye wish it! Stone— 115
Gritstone, a-crumble! Clammy squares which sweat
As if the corpse they keep were oozing through—

68. **jasper.** The Bishop bargains for something better than travertine, and hits upon a stone much in use by the ancients, especially its dark green variety. St. John in Revelation says that the walls of the New Jerusalem are of jasper, but it is doubtful if this consideration influenced the Bishop. 70. **bath,** Many Renaissance princes and prelates used old Roman sarcophagi as baths, and frequently were buried in them. 79. **Ulpian,** a famous lawyer of second century Rome, but his style did not compare with that of Cicero (Tully) in the estimation of the Renaissance. Gandolf's epitaph is second rate like himself, in the Bishop's opinion, for the style is that of Ulpian. *Elucescebat* is not classical Latin, which would have used the simple form *elucebat*. Gandolf's memorialist has made a slip, in the Bishop's opinion, as if he had said, "He was extinguished," when he meant "He was distinguished." The bishop was a genuine scholar and wanted no such tang of the upstart ignoramus on his tomb. 82. **And see,** etc., alluding to the Mass. 87. **I fold,** etc. He imagines how he would look if carved recumbent. **crook.** The shepherd's crook or crosier, much bejeweled and overlaid with gold, is carried by the bishop as a sign of his office as shepherd of his flock.

89. **mort-cloth,** death-cloth, pall. 95. **sermon on the mount.** The bishop is here somewhat delirious or else not clear on his martyrology. 99. **Elucescebat.** See note on line 79. 101. **Evil and brief,** etc., the sermon again. 105. **They glitter,** etc., an amazing bit of character revelation. 108. **vizor,** a helmet or mask, such as was used ornamentally in sculpture. **Term,** a square stone post surmounted by a bust of the Roman god of boundaries, Terminus. 109. **lynx,** one of the animals that accompanied Dionysus. 111. **entablature.** The bishop refers to the slab on which his image will be placed. It is to be supported by columns or pilasters. 116. **Gritstone,** referring again to the travertine limestone.

And no more *lapis* to delight the world!
Well, go! I bless ye. Fewer tapers there,
But in a row. And, going, turn your backs 120
—Aye, like departing altar-ministrants,
And leave me in my church, the church for peace,
That I may watch at leisure if he leers—
Old Gandolf—at me, from his onion-stone,
As still he envied me, so fair she was!

(1845)

THE LABORATORY

ANCIEN RÉGIME

NOTE

In medieval and Renaissance Europe, alchemists attained considerable skill in the development of methods of poisoning. The drug chiefly employed was arsenic, either in solution or pastille. The poison was graduated to act either quickly or slowly. In "The Laboratory" Browning does not explain the external situation more clearly and closely than to tell us that it is in an alchemist's laboratory during the old order of the French monarchy. The poem is as striking for its antitheses as for its compression, allusiveness, and omissions. Many of its clauses point the way to whole narratives. The dominant note is a fierce passion for the emotional experiences of life.

Now that I, tying thy glass mask tightly,
May gaze through these faint smokes curling whitely,
As thou pliest thy trade in this devil's smithy—
Which is the poison to poison her, prithee?

He is with her; and they know that I know 5
Where they are, what they do. They believe my tears flow
While they laugh, laugh at me, at me fled to the drear
Empty church, to pray God in, for them!—I am here.

Grind away, moisten and mash up thy paste,
Pound at thy powder—I am not in haste! 10
Better sit thus, and observe thy strange things,
Than go where men wait me and dance at the King's.

That in the mortar—you call it a gum?
Ah, the brave tree whence such gold oozings come!
And yonder soft phial, the exquisite blue, 15
Sure to taste sweetly—is that poison too?

Had I but all of them, thee and thy treasures,
What a wild crowd of invisible pleasures!
To carry pure death in an earring, a casket, 19
A signet, a fan-mount, a filigree-basket!

Soon, at the King's, a mere lozenge to give,
And Pauline should have just thirty minutes to live!
But to light a pastille, and Elise, with her head,
And her breast, and her arms, and her hands, should drop dead!

Quick—is it finished? The color's too grim! 25
Why not soft like the phial's, enticing and dim?
Let it brighten her drink, let her turn it and stir,
And try it and taste, ere she fix and prefer!

What, a drop? She's not little, no minion like me!
That's why she ensnared him; this never will free 30
The soul from those masculine eyes—say, "no!"
To that pulse's magnificent come-and-go.

Title. **Ancien Régime**, the old order; a name for that period of French history under the monarchy which terminated with the revolution. 1. **glass mask**, employed by medieval alchemists to protect the face, lungs, and eyes from the fumes given off by their experiments.

23. **pastille**, a prepared lump containing aromatic material, which on being ignited would give off a strong perfume. 29. **minion**, a small, delicate creature.

For only last night, as they whispered, I brought
My own eyes to bear on her so, that I thought
Could I keep them one half minute fixed, she would fall, 35
Shriveled; she fell not; yet this does it all!

Not that I bid you spare her the pain!
Let death be felt and the proof remain;
Brand, burn up, bite into its grace—
He is sure to remember her dying face! 40

Is it done? Take my mask off! Nay, be not morose;
It kills her, and this prevents seeing it close:
The delicate droplet, my whole fortune's fee—
If it hurts her, beside, can it ever hurt me?

Now, take all my jewels, gorge gold to your fill, 45
You may kiss me, old man, on my mouth if you will!
But brush this dust off me, lest horror it brings
Ere I know it—next moment I dance at the King's!

(1841)

43. **fee**, value.

THE STATUE AND THE BUST

Note

Browning here relates a Florentine story of how at a wedding feast the sixteenth-century Grand-Duke Ferdinand of Tuscany fell in love with the bride of one of the Riccardi family, who returned his affection; but neither spoke to the other thereafter because both lacked the impulse necessary to overcome the bars placed in their way by the jealous husband. Browning wrote many poems both on the subject of disappointed love and on the attainment, if but for one moment, of perfect love. He believed in following an ideal devotedly, even though it ran counter to the voice of the world. In this poem Browning narrates the incident in the third person, and develops the characterization simultaneously with the incident. However, he appears in person at the end of the poem to comment on the characters. It is for the reader to decide which form of narrative is the more vivid—this, or the dramatic monologue.

There's a palace in Florence, the world knows well,
And a statue watches it from the square,
And this story of both do the townsmen tell.

Ages ago, a lady there,
At the farthest window facing the east 5
Asked, "Who rides by, with the royal air?"

The bridesmaids' prattle around her ceased;
She leaned forth, one on either hand;
They saw how the blush of the bride increased—

They felt by its beats her heart expand— 10
As one at each ear and both in a breath
Whispered, "The Great-Duke Ferdinand."

That selfsame instant, underneath,
The Duke rode past in his idle way,
Empty and fine like a swordless sheath.

Gay he rode, with a friend as gay, 16
Till he threw his head back—"Who is she?"
—"A bride the Riccardi brings home today."

Hair in heaps laid heavily
Over a pale brow spirit-pure— 20
Carved like the heart of the coal-black tree,

Crisped like a war-steed's encolure—
And vainly sought to dissemble her eyes
Of the blackest black our eyes endure.

And lo, a blade for a knight's emprise 25
Filled the fine empty sheath of a man—
The Duke grew straightway brave and wise.

1. **palace**, the old Riccardi palace, now known as the Palazzo Antinori, on the Plazza Annunziata, in the middle of which the equestrian statue of Duke Ferdinand de' Medici stands facing the palace. 2. **statue**. John of Douay (1524-1608) made this. 4. **lady**. She was about to marry a Riccardi. 12. **Ferdinand**. Ferdinand I ruled Florence as Grand Duke of Tuscany (1587-1609). 21. **coal-black tree**, ebony tree. 22. **Crisped**, curled or wavy. **encolure**, mane.

He looked at her, as a lover can;
She looked at him, as one who awakes—
The past was a sleep, and her life began.

As love so ordered for both their sakes,
A feast was held that selfsame night 32
In the pile which the mighty shadow makes.

(For Via Larga is three-parts light,
But the Palace overshadows one, 35
Because of a crime which may God requite!

To Florence and God the wrong was done,
Through the first republic's murder there
By Cosimo and his cursed son.)

The Duke (with the statue's face in the square) 40
Turned in the midst of his multitude
At the bright approach of the bridal pair.

Face to face the lovers stood
A single minute and no more,
While the bridegroom bent as a man subdued— 45

Bowed till his bonnet brushed the floor—
For the Duke on the lady a kiss conferred,
As the courtly custom was of yore.

In a minute can lovers exchange a word?
If a word did pass, which I do not think,
Only one out of the thousand heard. 51

That was the bridegroom. At day's brink
He and his bride were alone at last
In a bed-chamber by a taper's blink.

Calmly he said that her lot was cast, 55
That the door she had passed was shut on her
Till the final catafalque repassed.

33. **pile**, the palace of the Medici on the Via Larga, which was later sold to the Riccardi. 34 ff. **For Via Larga**, etc. These two stanzas refer to the fact that Florence ceased to be a republic when Cosimo de' Medici was made Grand Duke of Tuscany by Pope Pius V in 1567. His son was Francesco I, who ruled Florence with unspeakable cruelty and depravity from 1574 to 1587. 57. **catafalque**, funeral canopy; i.e., until she was carried out as a corpse.

The world meanwhile, its noise and stir,
Through a certain window facing the east
She could watch like a convent's chronicler. 60

Since passing the door might lead to a feast,
And a feast might lead to so much beside,
He, of many evils, chose the least.

"Freely I choose, too," said the bride—
"Your window and its world suffice," 65
Replied the tongue, while the heart replied—

"If I spend the night with that devil twice,
May his window serve as my loop of hell
Whence a damned soul looks on paradise!

"I fly to the Duke who loves me well, 70
Sit by his side and laugh at sorrow
Ere I count another ave-bell.

"'Tis only the coat of a page to borrow,
And tie my hair in a horse-boy's trim,
And I save my soul—but not to-morrow"— 75

(She checked herself and her eye grew dim)—
"My father tarries to bless my state;
I must keep it one day more for him.

"Is one day more so long to wait?
Moreover the Duke rides past, I know—
We shall see each other, sure as fate." 81

She turned on her side and slept. Just so!
So we resolve on a thing and sleep.
So did the lady, ages ago.

That night the Duke said, "Dear or cheap 85
As the cost of this cup of bliss may prove
To body or soul, I will drain it deep!"

72. **ave-bell**, the bell announcing the time to pray to the Virgin Mary.

And on the morrow, bold with love,
He beckoned the bridegroom (close on call,
As his duty bade, by the Duke's alcove)

And smiled, "'Twas a very funeral 91
Your lady will think, this feast of ours,
A shame to efface, whate'er befall!

"What if we break from the Arno bowers
And let Petraja, cool and green, 95
Cure last night's fault with this morning's flowers?"

The bridegroom, not a thought to be seen
On his steady brow and quiet mouth,
Said, "Too much favor for me so mean!

"But alas! my lady leaves the South. 100
Each wind that comes from the Apennine
Is a menace to her tender youth.

"No way exists, the wise opine,
If she quits her palace twice this year,
To avert the flower of life's decline." 105

Quoth the Duke, "A sage and a kindly fear.
Moreover Petraja is cold this spring—
Be our feast tonight as usual here!"

And then to himself—"Which night shall bring 109
Thy bride to her lover's embraces, fool—
Or I am the fool, and thou art the king!

"Yet my passion must wait a night, nor cool—
For tonight the Envoy arrives from France,
Whose heart I unlock with thyself, my tool.

"I need thee still and might miss perchance. 115
Today is not wholly lost, beside,
With its hope of my lady's countenance—

"For I ride—what should I do but ride?
And passing her palace, if I list,
May glance at its window—well betide!"

94. **Arno bowers**, his gardens or palace by the river Arno which runs through Florence. 95. **Petraja**, a suburb of Florence. 120. **well betide!** may it turn out well.

So said, so done; nor the lady missed 121
One ray that broke from the ardent brow,
Nor a curl of the lips where the spirit kissed.

Be sure that each renewed the vow—
No morrow's sun should arise and set 125
And leave them then as it left them now.

But next day passed, and next day yet,
With still fresh cause to wait one day more
Ere each leaped over the parapet.

And still, as love's brief morning wore,
With a gentle start, half smile, half sigh, 131
They found love not as it seemed before.

They thought it would work infallibly,
But not in despite of heaven and earth—
The rose would blow when the storm passed by. 135

Meantime they could profit in winter's dearth
By store of winter's fruits that supplant the rose—
The world and its ways have a certain worth! 138

And to press a point while these oppose
Were simple policy—then better wait,
We lose no friends and we gain no foes.

Meanwhile, worse fates than a lover's fate,
Who daily may ride and pass and look
Where his lady watches behind the grate!

And she—she watched the square like a book, 145
Holding one picture and only one,
Which daily to find she undertook.

When the picture was reached, the book was done,
And she turned from the picture at night to scheme
Of tearing it out for herself next sun. 150

So weeks grew months, years; gleam by gleam

The glory dropped from their youth and love,
And both perceived they had dreamed a dream;

Which hovered as dreams do, still above;
But who can take a dream for a truth? 155
Oh, hide our eyes from the next remove!

One day as the lady saw her youth
Depart, and the silver thread that streaked
Her hair, and, worn by the serpent's tooth,

The brow so puckered, the chin so peaked— 160
And wondered who the woman was,
Hollow-eyed and haggard-cheeked,

Fronting her silent in the glass—
"Summon here," she suddenly said,
"Before the rest of my old self pass, 165

"Him, the Carver, a hand to aid,
Who fashions the clay no love will change,
And fixes a beauty never to fade.

"Let Robbia's craft so apt and strange
Arrest the remains of young and fair, 170
And rivet them while the seasons range.

"Make me a face on the window there
Waiting as ever, mute the while,
My love to pass below in the square! 174

"And let me think that it may beguile
Dreary days which the dead must spend
Down in their darkness under the aisle—

"To say—'What matters it at the end?
I did no more while my heart was warm
Than does that image, my pale-faced friend.' 180

"Where is the use of the lip's red charm
The heaven of hair, the pride of the brow,
And the blood that blues the inside arm—

"Unless we turn, as the soul knows how,
The earthly gift to an end divine? 185
A lady of clay is as good, I trow."

But long ere Robbia's cornice, fine
With flowers and fruits which leaves enlace,
Was set where now is the empty shrine—

(And, leaning out of a bright blue space, 190
As a ghost might lean from a chink of sky
The passionate pale lady's face—

Eying ever, with earnest eye
And quick-turned neck at its breathless stretch,
Someone who ever is passing by—) 195

The Duke sighed like the simplest wretch
In Florence, "Youth, my dream escapes!
Will its record stay?" And he bade them fetch

Some subtle molder of brazen shapes—
"Can the soul, the will, die out of a man 200
Ere his body find the grave that gapes?

"John of Douay shall effect my plan,
Set me on horseback here aloft,
Alive, as the crafty sculptor can,

"In the very square I have crossed so oft! 205
That men may admire, when future suns
Shall touch the eyes to a purpose soft,

"While the mouth and the brow stay brave in bronze—
Admire and say, 'When he was alive,
How he would take his pleasure once!' 210

"And it shall go hard but I contrive
To listen the while and laugh in my tomb
At idleness which aspires to strive."

So! while these wait the trump of doom,
How do their spirits pass, I wonder, 215
Nights and days in the narrow room?

169. **Robbia.** Luca della Robbia (1400-1482) developed a form of sculpture in terra cotta or bisque which was extremely popular among the Florentines and was employed not merely for bas-reliefs and statues, but for cornices of houses. He made many busts of women such as the lady here orders.

202. **John of Douay.** See note on line 2, page 295.

Still, I suppose, they sit and ponder
What a gift life was, ages ago,
Six steps out of the chapel yonder.

Surely they see not God, I know, 220
Nor all that chivalry of his,
The soldier-saints who, row on row,

Burn upward each to his point of bliss—
Since, the end of life being manifest,
He had burned his way through the world to this. 225

I hear your reproach—"But delay was best,
For their end was a crime!"—Oh, a crime will do
As well, I reply, to serve for a test,

As a virtue golden through and through,
Sufficient to vindicate itself 230
And prove its worth at a moment's view!

Must a game be played for the sake of pelf?
Where a button goes, 'twere an epigram
To offer the stamp of the very Guelph.

The true has no value beyond the sham.
As well the counter as coin, I submit, 236
When your table's a hat, and your prize a dram.

Stake your counter as boldly every whit,
Venture as warily, use the same skill,
Do your best, whether winning or losing it, 240

If you choose to play—is my principle!
Let a man contend to the uttermost
For his life's set prize, be it what it will!

The counter our lovers staked was lost
As surely as if it were lawful coin. 245
And the sin I impute to each frustrate ghost

Is the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin,
Though the end in sight was a vice, I say.
You of the virtue (we issue join)
How strive you? *De te, fabula!* (1855)

234. **stamp of the Guelph.** Current English money is stamped with the head of the reigning sovereign. The present English dynasty is of the Guelph family. 250. **De te, fabula!** "concerning thee is the story!"

FRA LIPPO LIPPI

Note

Fra Lippo Lippi (1402?-1469), the child of a Florentine butcher, was left an orphan at two years of age. When he was eight years old, an aunt put him in the Carmelite monastery in Florence, where he grew up to be a painter under the tutelage of Masaccio. For our knowledge of his life we depend upon *The Lives of the Most Excellent Italian Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, by Georgio Vasari (1511-1571). As Vasari was a gossip and frequently very biased, we hesitate to credit all his statements about the adult life of Fra Lippo Lippi, who, according to Vasari, was always out of money because of constant love affairs. We know that all his life he painted in and about Florence, and we know that his pictures, though spiritual in subject, are human and sensuous in execution. Whether Cosimo de' Medici locked him up in his palace in Florence to insure the completion of a picture, whether Fra Lippo Lippi escaped nightly by a rope of sheets to amuse himself with the Florentine girls, whether in 1458 while painting for the nuns in the convent at Prato he saw and eloped with the beautiful Lucrezia Buti, a novice or pupil of the nuns, who bore him his son Filippino Lippi, we cannot say. Browning used the first part of the story and wrought from it one of his most successful dramatic monologues. He chooses a typical though significant moment in Fra Lippo Lippi's life, and makes the painter relate his autobiography, and reveal his view of life and art. As in "Andrea del Sarto" the medium of expression is poetry, but the point of view is that of the painter. The entire poem, which begins with the arrest of Fra Lippo Lippi by the city watch just as he is returning to the Medici palace from an escapade, leads up to the climactic description of the picture of the Coronation of the Virgin, which was painted by Fra Lippo Lippi for the church of St. Ambrose as an atonement, Browning makes him say, for this night's escapade.

I am poor brother Lippo, by your leave!
You need not clap your torches to my face.
Zooks, what's to blame? you think you see a monk!
What, 'tis past midnight, and you go the rounds,
And here you catch me at an alley's end 5
Where sportive ladies leave their doors ajar?
The Carmine's my cloister; hunt it up,
Do—harry out, if you must show your zeal,

3. **Zooks,** an abbreviation for Gadzooks, meaning God's hooks or hands. 7. **cloister.** He had been brought up in the Florentine monastery of the Carmelites.

Whatever rat, there, haps on his wrong hole,
And nip each softling of a wee white mouse, 10
Weke, weke, that's crept to keep him company!
Aha, you know your betters? Then, you'll take
Your hand away that's fiddling on my throat,
And please to know me likewise. Who am I?
Why, one, sir, who is lodging with a friend 15
Three streets off—he's a certain. . . how d'ye call?
Master—a . . . Cosimo of the Medici,
In the house that caps the corner. Boh! you were best!
Remember and tell me, the day you're hanged,
How you affected such a gullet's-gripe!
But you, sir, it concerns you that your knaves 21
Pick up a manner nor discredit you.
Zooks, are we pilchards, that they sweep the streets
And count fair prize what comes into their net?
He's Judas to a tittle, that man is! 25
Just such a face! Why, sir, you make amends.
Lord! I'm not angry! Bid your hang-dogs go
Drink out this quarter-florin to the health
Of the munificent House that harbors me
(And many more beside, lads! more beside!), 30
And all's come square again. I'd like his face—
His, elbowing on his comrade in the door
With the pike and lantern—for the slave that holds
John Baptist's head a-dangle by the hair
With one hand ("look you, now," as who should say) 35
And his weapon in the other, yet unwiped!
It's not your chance to have a bit of chalk,
A wood-coal or the like? or you should see!
Yes, I'm the painter, since you style me so.
What, brother Lippo's doings, up and down, 40
You know them and they take you? like enough!
I saw the proper twinkle in your eye—
'Tell you I liked your looks at very first.
Let's sit and set things straight now, hip to haunch.
Here's spring come, and the nights one makes up bands 45
To roam the town and sing out carnival,
And I've been three weeks shut within my mew,
A-painting for the great man, saints and saints
And saints again. I could not paint all night—
Ouf! I leaned out of window for fresh air. 50
There came a hurry of feet and little feet,
A sweep of lute-strings, laughs, and whifts of song—
Flower o' the broom,
Take away love, and our earth is a tomb!
Flower o' the quince, 55
I let Lisa go, and what good in life since?
Flower o' the thyme—and so on. Round they went.
Scarce had they turned the corner when a titter,
Like the skipping of rabbits by moonlight—three slim shapes—
And a face that looked up . . . zooks, sir, flesh and blood, 60
That's all I'm made of! Into shreds it went,
Curtain and counterpane and coverlet,
All the bed furniture—a dozen knots,

17. **Cosimo of the Medici**, Cosimo de' Medici (1389-1464), the first of the Medici to give greatness to his house through his statecraft and patronage of art. He was one of the most enlightened appreciators of the Renaissance. When the guard realizes that Fra Lippo Lippi is under his protection, the Brother has nothing more to fear. 23. **pilchards**, cheap sardines. 25. **He's Judas**, etc. The painter sees the possibility of using one of the guards as a model. 28. **Drink out**, etc. Since a florin was worth about fifty cents, the guard were not in danger of getting drunk on the amount that they received.

46. **carnival**, a period of merrymaking immediately preceding Lent. 47. **mew**, cage. 53. **Flower o' the broom**, etc. Here Browning adopts a popular Italian song form known as the *stornello*. It is antiphonal, for the first singer mentions the name of a flower in one line, and the second singer caps it with two riming lines on a love theme. The first line usually has five syllables; the second and third have eleven each. Browning makes the reply only one line.

There was a ladder! Down I let myself,
Hands and feet, scrambling somehow, and so dropped, 65
And after them. I came up with the fun
Hard by St. Laurence, hail fellow, well met—
Flower o' the rose,
If I've been merry, what matter who knows?
And so as I was stealing back again 70
To get to bed and have a bit of sleep
Ere I rise up tomorrow and go work
On Jerome knocking at his poor old breast
With his great round stone to subdue the flesh,
You snap me of the sudden. Ah, I see! 75
Though your eye twinkles still, you shake your head—
Mine's shaved—a monk, you say—the sting's in that!
If Master Cosimo announced himself,
Mum's the word naturally; but a monk!
Come, what am I a beast for? tell us, now! 80
I was a baby when my mother died
And father died and left me in the street.
I starved there, God knows how, a year or two
On fig-skins, melon-parings, rinds, and shucks,
Refuse and rubbish. One fine frosty day
My stomach being empty as your hat, 86
The wind doubled me up and down I went.
Old Aunt Lapaccia trussed me with one hand
(Its fellow was a stinger as I knew),
And so along the wall, over the bridge,
By the straight cut to the convent. Six words there, 91
While I stood munching my first bread that month:
"So, boy, you're minded," quoth the good fat father
Wiping his own mouth—'twas refection-time—
"To quit this very miserable world? 95
Will you renounce" . . . "the mouthful of bread?" thought I;
By no means! Brief, they made a monk of me;
I did renounce the world, its pride and greed,
Palace, farm, villa, shop, and banking-house,
Trash, such as these poor devils of Medici 100
Have given their hearts to—all at eight years old.
Well, sir, I found in time, you may be sure,
'Twas not for nothing—the good bellyful,
The warm serge and the rope that goes all round,
And day-long blessed idleness beside! 105
"Let's see what the urchin's fit for"—that came next.
Not overmuch their way, I must confess.
Such a to-do! they tried me with their books.
Lord, they'd have taught me Latin in pure waste!
Flower o' the clove, 110
All the Latin I construe is "amo," I love!
But, mind you, when a boy starves in the streets
Eight years together, as my fortune was,
Watching folk's faces to know who will fling
The bit of half-stripped grape-bunch he desires, 115
And who will curse or kick him for his pains—
Which gentleman processional and fine,
Holding a candle to the Sacrament,
Will wink and let him lift a plate and catch
The droppings of the wax to sell again,
Or holla for the Eight and have him whipped— 121
How say I?—nay, which dog bites, which lets drop

67. **St. Laurence**, the famous church of San Lorenzo. 72. **work on Jerome.** There is considerable irony in having Fra Lippo Lippi at work on a picture of St. Jerome (340-420), the translator of the Bible into the Latin Vulgate, who is usually pictured as alone in the desert, either working at his translation or beating his breast with a stone to mortify the flesh. 88. **Lapaccia**, the aunt who cared for Fra Lippo Lippi after the death of his parents.

118. **Sacrament.** During processions of the Sacrament or the image of the Blessed Virgin, members of the congregation followed bearing lighted candles. 121. **Eight**, the magistrates who then governed Florence.

His bone from the heap of offal in the street!
Why, soul and sense of him grow sharp alike,
He learns the look of things, and none the less 125
For admonitions from the hunger-pinch.
I had a store of such remarks, be sure,
Which, after I found leisure, turned to use:
I drew men's faces on my copybooks,
Scrawled them within the antiphonary's marge, 130
Joined legs and arms to the long music-notes,
Found eyes and nose and chin for A's and B's,
And made a string of pictures of the world
Betwixt the ins and outs of verb and noun,
On the wall, the bench, the door. The monks looked black. 135
"Nay," quoth the Prior, "turn him out, d'ye say?
In no wise. Lose a crow and catch a lark.
What if at last we get our man of parts,
We Carmelites, like those Camaldolese
And Preaching Friars, to do our church up fine 140
And put the front on it that ought to be!
And hereupon they bade me daub away.
Thank you! my head being crammed, the walls a blank,
Never was such prompt disemburdening.
First, every sort of monk, the black and white, 145
I drew them, fat and lean; then folks at church,
From good old gossips waiting to confess
Their cribs of barrel-droppings, candle-ends—

127. **remarks**, observations. 130. **antiphonary**, the Service Book of the Catholic Church, compiled by Gregory the Great in 590 A.D. It was called *The Antiphonary* because it contained the responses of the choir, together with the music. 139. **Carmelites**, an order established in the twelfth century on Mt. Carmel, in Syria. **Camaldolese**, an order founded in the tenth century by St. Romualdo. Their name came from their first monastery at Campo Maldoli. 140. **Preaching Friars**, the Dominicans, founded by St. Dominic, and given their name in 1215 by Pope Innocent III. **to do our church**, etc. The other monastic orders had already discovered brothers who could adorn the walls of their monasteries.

To the breathless fellow at the altar-foot,
Fresh from his murder, safe and sitting there 150
With the little children round him in a row
Of admiration, half for his beard and half
For that white anger of his victim's son
Shaking a fist at him with one fierce arm,
Signing himself with the other because of Christ 155
(Whose sad face on the cross sees only this
After the passion of a thousand years),
Till some poor girl, her apron o'er her head
(Which the intense eyes looked through), came at eve
On tiptoe, said a word, dropped in a loaf, 160
Her pair of earrings, and a bunch of flowers
(The brute took growling), prayed, and then was gone.
I painted all, then cried, "'Tis ask and have—
Choose, for more's ready!"—laid the ladder flat,
And showed my covered bit of cloister-wall. 165
The monks closed in a circle and praised loud
Till checked, taught what to see and not to see,
Being simple bodies—"That's the very man!
Look at the boy who stoops to pat the dog!
That woman's like the Prior's niece who comes 170
To care about his asthma; it's the life!"
But there my triumph's straw-fire flared and funked—
Their betters took their turn to see and say;
The Prior and the learned pulled a face
And stopped all that in no time. "How? what's here? 175

149. **breathless fellow**, etc. Criminals who took refuge in a church before the secular officers apprehended them were under the protection of the church and were tried before a church court.

Quite from the mark of painting, bless us all!
Faces, arms, legs, and bodies like the true
As much as pea and pea! It's devil's-game!
Your business is not to catch men with show,
With homage to the perishable clay, 180
But lift them over it, ignore it all,
Make them forget there's such a thing as flesh.
Your business is to paint the souls of men—
Man's soul, and it's a fire, smoke . . no, it's not . .
It's vapor done up like a newborn babe— 185
(In that shape when you die it leaves your mouth)
It's . . well, what matters talking, it's the soul!
Give us no more of body than shows soul.
Here's Giotto, with his Saint a-praising God!
That sets us praising—why not stop with him? 190
Why put all thoughts of praise out of our head
With wonder at lines, colors, and what not?
Paint the soul, never mind the legs and arms!
Rub all out, try at it a second time.
Oh, that white smallish female with the breasts, 195
She's just my niece . . . Herodias, I would say—
Who went and danced and got men's heads cut off—
Have it all out!" Now, is this sense, I ask?
A fine way to paint soul, by painting body
So ill, the eye can't stop there, must go further 200

186. **In that shape**, etc. Frequently in Byzantine and medieval mosaics and paintings the soul is represented as a small winged figure just issuing from the mouth of the deceased. 189. **Giotto** (1266-1337), the greatest painter of the early Renaissance, renowned for his frescoes of the life of St. Francis in the church at Assisi. The prior's criticism is not just, for Giotto's figures are vigorous and lifelike. 196. **Herodias**, the wife of Herod. With the help of her daughter Salome, she contrived the death of John the Baptist.

And can't fare worse! Thus, yellow does for white
When what you put for yellow's simply black,
And any sort of meaning looks intense
When all beside itself means and looks naught.
Why can't a painter lift each foot in turn, 205
Left foot and right foot, go a double step,
Make his flesh liker and his soul more like,
Both in their order? Take the prettiest face,
The Prior's niece . . . patron-saint—is it so pretty
You can't discover if it means hope, fear, 210
Sorrow or joy? Won't beauty go with these?
Suppose I've made her eyes all right and blue,
Can't I take breath and try to add life's flash,
And then add soul and heighten them threefold?
Or say there's beauty with no soul at all— 215
(I never saw it—put the case the same—)
If you get simple beauty and nought else,
You get about the best thing God invents—
That's somewhat. And you'll find the soul you have missed,
Within yourself, when you return Him thanks! 220
"Rub all out!" Well, well, there's my life, in short,
And so the thing has gone on ever since.
I'm grown a man no doubt, I've broken bounds—
You should not take a fellow eight years old
And make him swear to never kiss the girls— 225
I'm my own master, paint now as I please—
Having a friend, you see, in the Corner-house!
Lord, it's fast holding by the rings in front—

Those great rings serve more purposes than just
To plant a flag in, or tie up a horse! 230
And yet the old schooling sticks—the old grave eyes
Are peeping o'er my shoulder as I work,
The heads shake still—"It's Art's decline, my son!
You're not of the true painters, great and old;
Brother Angelico's the man, you'll find;
Brother Lorenzo stands his single peer. 236
Fag on at flesh, you'll never make the third!"
Flower o' the pine,
You keep your mistr . . . manners, and I'll stick to mine!
I'm not the third, then; bless us, they must know! 240
Don't you think they're the likeliest to know,
They, with their Latin? So I swallow my rage,
Clench my teeth, suck my lips in tight, and paint
To please them—sometimes do, and sometimes don't,
For, doing most, there's pretty sure to come 245
A turn—some warm eve finds me at my saints—
A laugh, a cry, the business of the world—
(*Flower o' the peach,*
Death for us all, and his own life for each!)
And my whole soul revolves, the cup runs over, 250
The world and life's too big to pass for a dream,
And I do these wild things in sheer despite,
And play the fooleries you catch me at,
In pure rage! the old mill-horse, out at grass
After hard years, throws up his stiff heels so, 255
Although the miller does not preach to him
The only good of grass is to make chaff.
What would men have? Do they like grass or no—
May they or mayn't they? all I want's the thing
Settled forever one way. As it is 260
You tell too many lies and hurt yourself.
You don't like what you only like too much,
You do like what, if given you at your word,
You find abundantly detestable.
For me, I think I speak as I was taught—
I always see the Garden and God there
A-making man's wife—and, my lesson learned, 267
The value and significance of flesh,
I can't unlearn ten minutes afterwards.

You understand me. I'm a beast, I know.
But see, now—why, I see as certainly 271
As that the morning-star's about to shine,
What will hap some day. We've a youngster here
Comes to our convent, studies what I do,
Slouches and stares and lets no atom drop— 275
His name is Guidi—he'll not mind the monks—
They call him Hulking Tom, he lets them talk—
He picks my practice up—he'll paint apace,
I hope so—though I never live so long,
I know what's sure to follow. You be judge! 280
You speak no Latin more than I, belike—
However, you're my man, you've seen the world
—The beauty and the wonder and the power,
The shapes of things, their colors, lights and shades,
Changes, surprises—and God made it all! 285
—For what? Do you feel thankful, aye or no,

235. **Angelico**, Fra Angelico (1387-1445), the most ethereal of the early Florentine painters. He was a member of the Dominican order. 236. **Lorenzo**, Lorenzo Monaco (1370-1425) of the Camaldolese order, who painted in the same manner as Fra Angelico, but more substantially.

276. **Guidi**, Masaccio, nicknamed "Hulking Tom," was in reality an elder, not a younger, contemporary of Fra Lippo Lippi. His dates are unknown, but he was at work in Florence between 1401 and 1429 in the Carmelite monastery. He was a vigorous and dramatic painter.

For this fair town's face, yonder river's line,
The mountain round it, and the sky above,
Much more the figures of man, woman, child,
These are the frame to? What's it all about?
To be passed over, despised? or dwelt upon,
Wondered at? oh, this last, of course, you say.
But why not do as well as say—paint these
Just as they are, careless what comes of it?
God's works—paint any one, and count it crime
To let a truth slip. Don't object, "His works
Are here already—nature is complete.
Suppose you reproduce her—(which you can't)
There's no advantage! you must beat her, then."
For, don't you mark? we're made so that we love
First when we see them painted, things we have passed
Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see;
And so they are better, painted—better to us,
Which is the same thing. Art was given for that—
God uses us to help each other so,
Lending our minds out. Have you noticed, now,
Your cullion's hanging face? A bit of chalk,
And trust me but you should, though! how much more,
If I drew higher things with the same truth!
That were to take the Prior's pulpit-place,
Interpret God to all of you! Oh, oh,
It makes me mad to see what men shall do
And we in our graves! This world's no blot for us,
Nor blank—it means intensely, and means good;

307. **cullion**, rascal.

To find its meaning is my meat and drink.
"Aye, but you don't so instigate to prayer!"
Strikes in the Prior; "when your meaning's plain
It does not say to folks—remember matins—
Or, mind you fast next Friday!" Why, for this
What need of art at all? A skull and bones,
Two bits of stick nailed crosswise, or, what's best,
A bell to chime the hour with, does as well.
I painted a St. Laurence six months since
At Prato, splashed the fresco in fine style.
"How looks my painting, now the scaffold's down?"
I ask a brother. "Hugely," he returns—
"Already not one phiz of your three slaves
Who turn the Deacon off his toasted side,
But's scratched and prodded to our heart's content,
The pious people have so eased their own
With coming to say prayers there in a rage.
We get on fast to see the bricks beneath.
Expect another job this time next year,
For pity and religion grow i' the crowd—
Your painting serves its purpose!" Hang the fools!

—That is—you'll not mistake an idle word
Spoke in a huff by a poor monk, God wot,
Tasting the air this spicy night which turns
The unaccustomed head like Chianti wine!

323. **St. Laurence**, an early Christian saint (c. 258), who is usually represented as about to be broiled to death on a gridiron. 324. **Prato**, a small town near Florence in whose cathedral and nunnery Fra Lippo Lippi worked between 1456-1458. 328. **Deacon**. St. Laurence was deacon to Pope Sixtus II. When the saint was being broiled, he remarked to his tormentors, "I'm roasted enough on this side; turn me over and eat me." 339. **Chianti**, a famous Italian wine produced chiefly in Tuscany.

Oh, the church knows! don't misreport me, now! 340
It's natural a poor monk out of bounds
Should have his apt word to excuse himself.
And hearken how I plot to make amends.
I have bethought me; I shall paint a piece
. . . There's for you! Give me six months, then go, see 345
Something in Sant' Ambrogio's! Bless the nuns!
They want a cast o' my office. I shall paint
God in the midst, Madonna and her babe,
Ringed by a bowery, flowery angel-brood,
Lilies and vestments and white faces, sweet 350
As puff on puff of grated orris-root
When ladies crowd to church at midsummer.
And then i' the front, of course a saint or two—
Saint John, because he saves the Florentines,
Saint Ambrose, who puts down in black and white 355
The convent's friends and gives them a long day,
And Job, I must have him there past mistake,
The man of Uz (and Us without the z,
Painters who need his patience). Well, all these
Secured at their devotions, up shall come
Out of a corner when you least expect, 361
As one by a dark stair into a great light,
Music and talking, who but Lippo! I!—
Mazed, motionless, and moonstruck—I'm the man!
Back I shrink—what is this I see and hear? 365
I, caught up with my monk's things by mistake,
My old serge gown and rope that goes all round,
I, in this presence, this pure company!
Where's a hole, where's a corner for escape?
Then steps a sweet angelic slip of a thing 370
Forward, puts out a soft palm—"Not so fast!"
—Addresses the celestial presence, "Nay—
He made you and devised you, after all,
Though he's none of you! Could Saint John there draw—
His camel-hair make up a painting-brush? 375
We come to brother Lippo for all that,
Iste perfecit opus!" So, all smile—
I shuffle sideways with my blushing face
Under the cover of a hundred wings
Thrown like a spread of kirtles when you're gay 380
And play hot cockles, all the doors being shut,
Till, wholly unexpected, in there pops
The hothead husband! Thus I scuttle off
To some safe bench behind, not letting go
The palm of her, the little lily thing 385
That spoke the good word for me in the nick,
Like the Prior's niece. . . Saint Lucy, I would say.
And so all's saved for me, and for the church
A pretty picture gained. Go, six months hence!
Your hand, sir, and goodby; no lights, no lights! 390
The street's hushed, and I know my own way back—
Don't fear me! There's the gray beginning. Zooks! (1855)

347. **They want,** etc. Here Fra Lippo Lippi describes the picture he painted for the church of St. Ambrose. It is known as the coronation of the Virgin. Angels and saints surround the Virgin, who kneels before God. At the lower right-hand corner Fra Lippo Lippi appears, and facing him there is a lovely angel bearing a ribboned device which reads *Iste perfecit opus* (This one [Fra Lippo Lippi] completed the work). **cast o' my office,** sample of my ability. 354. **Saint John.** St. John the Baptist is the patron saint of Florence. 355. **Saint Ambrose.** As the patron saint of the church and convent, he would keep a list of benefactors to both. 358. **Uz,** Job's city.

377. **Iste perfecit opus.** See first note on line 347. 380. **kirtle,** a woman's gown. 381. **hot cockles,** a rustic game in which one covers his eyes, and guesses who strikes him. 387. **Saint Lucy,** a virgin martyr of the early church who lived in the time of Diocletian (284-305). She was tortured on the discovery that she was a Christian, but she could not be harmed or moved in any way until finally she was slain by the sword.

ANDREA DEL SARTO

CALLED "THE FAULTLESS PAINTER"

NOTE

Browning obtained most of his biographical material about Andrea del Sarto from Vasari's *Lives of the Most Excellent Italian Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*. There is plenty of evidence that Vasari was prejudiced and opinionated—he was at one time a pupil of Andrea—but on the whole his story harmonizes well with the character of the artist as revealed in his paintings. Andrea (1486-1531), the son of a Florentine tailor, early showed an aptitude for painting and soon became noted for his faultless technique. Whatever was the cause, Andrea never was fired in his soul by his art and contented himself with exquisite execution. Consequently his figures often pose consciously, as if to stress a gesture or a sweep of their robes. What the truth about his wife is, we cannot tell. Vasari says she was the wife of a cap-maker named Recanati—her name was Lucrezia del Fede—and he adds that she was jealous, eager for money, extravagant, and faithless. Her picture, as Andrea has left it for us, is that of a beautiful, but soulless woman. Be that as it may, Andrea married her in 1512 after the death of her husband, and at once his financial difficulties began. In 1518 he went to France at the request of Francis I, but just as he was beginning to work well, Lucrezia called him home. The King gave him a sum of money with which to buy works of art for him in Italy, and requested him to return soon, to which request Andrea assented. But on reaching Florence he built himself a house with the money and never went back to France. In 1531 he caught the plague, while Florence was besieged, and died, uncared for by his wife.

But do not let us quarrel any more,
No, my Lucrezia; bear with me for once.
Sit down and all shall happen as you wish.
You turn your face, but does it bring your heart?
I'll work then for your friend's friend, never fear, 5
Treat his own subject after his own way,
Fix his own time, accept, too, his own price,
And shut the money into this small hand
When next it takes mine. Will it? tenderly?
Oh, I'll content him—but tomorrow, Love! 10
I often am much wearier than you think,
This evening more than usual, and it seems
As if—forgive now—should you let me sit
Here by the window with your hand in mine
And look a half hour forth on Fiesole, 15
Both of one mind, as married people use,
Quietly, quietly, the evening through,
I might get up tomorrow to my work
Cheerful and fresh as ever. Let us try.
Tomorrow, how you shall be glad for this!
Your soft hand is a woman of itself, 21
And mine the man's bared breast she curls inside.
Don't count the time lost, neither; you must serve
For each of the five pictures we require—
It saves a model. So! keep looking so—
My serpentining beauty, rounds on rounds! 26
—How could you ever prick those perfect ears,
Even to put the pearl there! oh, so sweet—
My face, my moon, my everybody's moon, 29
Which everybody looks on and calls his,
And, I suppose, is looked on by in turn,
While she looks—no one's; very dear, no less!
You smile? why, there's my picture ready made.
There's what we painters call our harmony! 34
A common grayness silvers everything—
All in a twilight, you and I alike
—You, at the point of your first pride in me
(That's gone you know), but I, at every point;
My youth, my hope, my art, being all toned down
To yonder sober pleasant Fiesole. 40
There's the bell clinking from the chapel-top;
That length of convent-wall across the way
Holds the trees safer, huddled more inside;
The last monk leaves the garden; days decrease
And autumn grows, autumn in everything. 45

15. **Fiesole**, a hill town three miles west of Florence, to which many Florentines retire in summer to avoid the heat of the city.

Eh? the whole seems to fall into a shape
As if I saw alike my work and self
And all that I was born to be and do,
A twilight-piece. Love, we are in God's hand.
How strange now looks the life he makes us lead; 50
So free we seem, so fettered fast we are!
I feel he laid the fetter; let it lie!
This chamber, for example—turn your head—
All that's behind us! You don't understand
Nor care to understand about my art, 55
But you can hear at least when people speak;
And that cartoon, the second from the door
—It is the thing, Love! so such things should be—
Behold Madonna! I am bold to say.
I can do with my pencil what I know, 60
What I see, what at bottom of my heart
I wish for, if I ever wish so deep—
Do easily, too—when I say, perfectly,
I do not boast, perhaps. Yourself are judge
Who listened to the Legate's talk last week, 65
And just as much they used to say in France.
At any rate 'tis easy, all of it!
No sketches first, no studies, that's long past—
I do what many dream of all their lives—
Dream? strive to do, and agonize to do,
And fail in doing. I could count twenty such 71
On twice your fingers, and not leave this town,
Who strive—you don't know how the others strive
To paint a little thing like that you smeared
Carelessly passing with your robes afloat, 75
Yet do much less, so much less, someone says,
(I know his name, no matter) so much less!
Well, less is more, Lucrezia! I am judged.
There burns a truer light of God in them,
In their vexed, beating, stuffed, and stopped-up brain, 80
Heart, or whate'er else, than goes on to prompt
This low-pulsed forthright craftsman's hand of mine.
Their works drop groundward, but themselves, I know,
Reach many a time a heaven that's shut to me,
Enter and take their place there sure enough, 85
Though they come back and cannot tell the world.
My works are nearer heaven, but I sit here.
The sudden blood of these men! at a word—
Praise them, it boils, or blame them, it boils, too.
I, painting from myself and to myself, 90
Know what I do, am unmoved by men's blame
Or their praise either. Somebody remarks
Morello's outline there is wrongly traced,
His hue mistaken—what of that? or else,
Rightly traced and well ordered—what of that? 95
Speak as they please, what does the mountain care?
Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or what's a heaven for? all is silver-gray
Placid and perfect with my art—the worse!
I know both what I want and what might gain— 100
And yet how profitless to know, to sigh
"Had I been two, another and myself,
Our head would have o'erlooked the world!" No doubt.
Yonder's a work, now, of that famous youth,
The Urbinate who died five years ago.
('Tis copied, George Vasari sent it me.) 106
Well, I can fancy how he did it all,
Pouring his soul, with kings and popes to see,

57. **cartoon**, an outline drawing from which a picture may be traced.

93. **Morello**, the highest ridge of the Apennines, north of Florence. 105. **Urbinate**, Raphael (1483-1520), who was born in Urbino. 106. **George Vasari**, the pupil of Andrea who wrote *The Lives of the Most Excellent Italian Painters, Sculptors, and Architects.*

Reaching, that Heaven might so replenish him,
Above and through his art—for it gives way;
That arm is wrongly put—and there again—
A fault to pardon in the drawing's lines,
Its body, so to speak! its soul is right,
He means right—that a child may understand.
Still, what an arm! and I could alter it.
But all the play, the insight, and the stretch—
Out of me! out of me! And wherefore out?
Had you enjoined them on me, given me soul,
We might have risen to Rafael, I and you.
Nay, Love, you did give all I asked, I think—
More than I merit, yes, by many times.
But had you—oh, with the same perfect brow,
And perfect eyes, and more than perfect mouth,
And the low voice my soul hears, as a bird
The fowler's pipe, and follows to the snare—
Had you, with these the same, but brought a mind!
Some women do so. Had the mouth there urged
"God and the glory! never care for gain.
The present by the future, what is that?
Live for fame, side by side with Agnolo!
Rafael is waiting. Up to God all three!"
I might have done it for you. So it seems—
Perhaps not. All is as God overrules.
Beside, incentives come from the soul's self;
The rest avail not. Why do I need you?
What wife had Rafael, or has Agnolo?
In this world, who can do a thing, will not—
And who would do it, cannot, I perceive.
Yet the will's somewhat—somewhat, too, the power—
And thus we half-men struggle. At the end,
God, I conclude, compensates, punishes.
'Tis safer for me, if the award be strict,
That I am something underrated here,
Poor this long while, despised, to speak the truth.
I dared not, do you know, leave home all day,
For fear of chancing on the Paris lords.
The best is when they pass and look aside;
But they speak sometimes; I must bear it all.
Well may they speak! That Francis, that first time,
And that long festal year at Fontainebleau!
I surely then could sometimes leave the ground,
Put on the glory, Rafael's daily wear,
In that humane great monarch's golden look—
One finger in his beard or twisted curl
Over his mouth's good mark that made the smile,
One arm about my shoulder, round my neck,
The jingle of his gold chain in my ear,
I painting proudly with his breath on me,
All his court round him, seeing with his eyes,
Such frank French eyes, and such a fire of souls
Profuse, my hand kept plying by those hearts—
And, best of all, this, this, this face beyond,
This in the background, waiting on my work,
To crown the issue with a last reward!
A good time, was it not, my kingly days?
And had you not grown restless—but I know—
'Tis done and past; 'twas right, my instinct said;
Too live the life grew, golden and not gray—
And I'm the weak-eyed bat no sun should tempt
Out of the grange whose four walls make his world.

130. **Agnolo**, Michael Angelo (1475-1564), who was one of the greatest artists of the Renaissance, being a master in sculpture, painting, and architecture.

150. **Fontainebleau**, one of the royal palaces of France, about thirty-seven miles southeast of Paris. It was there that Andrea worked for Francis in 1518.
170. **grange**, farmhouse or barn.

How could it end in any other way?
You called me, and I came home to your heart.
The triumph was—to reach and stay there; since
I reached it ere the triumph, what is lost?
Let my hands frame your face in your hair's gold, 175
You beautiful Lucrezia that are mine!
"Rafael did this, Andrea painted that—
The Roman's is the better when you pray,
But still the other's Virgin was his wife—"
Men will excuse me. I am glad to judge
Both pictures in your presence; clearer grows 181
My better fortune, I resolve to think.
For, do you know, Lucrezia, as God lives,
Said one day Agnolo, his very self,
To Rafael . . . I have known it all these years . . . 185
(When the young man was flaming out his thoughts
Upon a palace-wall for Rome to see,
Too lifted up in heart because of it)
"Friend, there's a certain sorry little scrub
Goes up and down our Florence, none cares how, 190
Who, were he set to plan and execute
As you are pricked on by your popes and kings,
Would bring the sweat into that brow of yours!"
To Rafael's!—And indeed the arm is wrong.
I hardly dare—yet, only you to see, 195
Give the chalk here—quick, thus the line should go!
Ay, but the soul! he's Rafael! rub it out!
Still, all I care for, if he spoke the truth,
(What he? why, who but Michel Agnolo?
Do you forget already words like those?)
If really there was such a chance, so lost,
Is, whether you're—not grateful—but more pleased. 202
Well, let me think so. And you smile indeed!
This hour has been an hour! Another smile?
If you would sit thus by me every night,
I should work better, do you comprehend? 206
I mean that I should earn more, give you more.
See, it is settled dusk now; there's a star;
Morello's gone, the watch-lights show the wall,
The cue-owls speak the name we call them by. 210
Come from the window, Love—come in, at last,
Inside the melancholy little house
We built to be so gay with. God is just.
King Francis may forgive me. Oft at nights
When I look up from painting, eyes tired out, 215
The walls become illumined, brick from brick
Distinct, instead of mortar, fierce bright gold,
That gold of his I did cement them with!
Let us but love each other. Must you go?
That Cousin here again? he waits outside? 220
Must see you—you, and not with me? Those loans!
More gaming debts to pay? you smiled for that?
Well, let smiles buy me! have you more to spend?
While hand and eye and something of a heart
Are left me, work's my ware, and what's it worth? 225
I'll pay my fancy. Only let me sit
The gray remainder of the evening out,
Idle, you call it, and muse perfectly
How I could paint were I but back in France,
One picture, just one more—the Virgin's face, 230
Not yours this time! I want you at my side
To hear them—that is, Michel Agnolo—
Judge all I do and tell you of its worth.
Will you? Tomorrow, satisfy your friend.
I take the subjects for his corridor, 235
Finish the portrait out of hand—there, there,

178. **The Roman's**, because Raphael painted much in Rome.

210. **cue-owls.** Every country explains the meaning of the owl's call by some word which sounds like the call. The Italian word which most closely approximates the call of the owl is "chiu" or "ciu."

And throw him in another thing or two
If he demurs; the whole should prove enough
To pay for this same Cousin's freak. Beside,
What's better and what's all I care about, 240
Get you the thirteen scudi for the ruff.
Love, does that please you? Ah, but what does he,
The Cousin, what does he to please you more?

I am grown peaceful as old age tonight.
I regret little, I would change still less.
Since there my past life lies, why alter it? 246
The very wrong to Francis! it is true
I took his coin, was tempted and complied,
And built this house and sinned, and all is said.
My father and my mother died of want— 250
Well, had I riches of my own? you see
How one gets rich! Let each one bear his lot.
They were born poor, lived poor, and poor they died;
And I have labored somewhat in my time
And not been paid profusely. Some good son 255
Paint my two hundred pictures—let him try!
No doubt there's something strikes a balance. Yes,
You loved me quite enough, it seems tonight.
This must suffice me here. What would one have?
In heaven, perhaps, new chances, one more chance— 260
Four great walls in the New Jerusalem,
Meted on each side by the angel's reed,
For Leonard, Rafael, Agnolo, and me
To cover—the three first without a wife,
While I have mine! So—still they overcome 265
Because there's still Lucrezia—as I choose.

Again the Cousin's whistle! Go, my Love. (1855)

241. **scudi**, Italian silver coins named *scudi* from the shield on them. Each was normally worth about ninety-seven cents. 261. **New Jerusalem**, heaven; mentioned in the Revelation of St. John, xxi, 15-17. 262. **Meted**, measured. 263. **Leonard**, Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), who alone excelled Michael Angelo in versatility, for he was painter, sculptor, architect, and engineer. It is interesting to note that he, too, worked for Francis I, and that he died in France and is buried at Amboise.

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON
(1809-1892)

*RIZPAH

NOTE

Tennyson's attention was drawn to this subject by an account of a similar incident in a penny magazine called *Old Brighton*. Little use is made of the biblical narrative in the poem itself, except for the atmosphere. When Rizpah's two sons were hanged (II Samuel, xxi) she guarded their bodies from the beasts and the birds until the autumn rains. Tennyson stresses a mother's emotional reaction to a similar incident, of which the Bible gives nothing.

Wailing, wailing, wailing, the wind over land and sea—
And Willy's voice in the wind, "O mother, come out to me!"
Why should he call me tonight, when he knows that I cannot go?
For the downs are as bright as day, and the full moon stares at the snow.

We should be seen, my dear; they would spy us out of the town. 5
The loud black nights for us, and the storm rushing over the down,
When I cannot see my own hand, but am led by the creak of the chain,
And grovel and grope for my son till I find myself drenched with the rain.

Anything fallen again? nay—what was there left to fall?
I have taken them home, I have numbered the bones, I have hidden them all. 10
What am I saying? and what are *you?* do you come as a spy?
Falls? what falls? who knows? As the tree falls so must it lie.

*Cf. "A Warning for All Desperate Women" (page 234), and "Number 3 on the Docket" (page 331). 4. **downs**, upland meadows. 11. **you**. Tennyson introduced a listener to motivate the monologue.

Who let her in? how long has she been? you—what have you heard?
Why did you sit so quiet? you never have spoken a word.
O—to pray with me—yes—a lady—none of their spies— 15
But the night has crept into my heart, and begun to darken my eyes.

Ah—you, that have lived so soft, what should *you* know of the night,
The blast and the burning shame and the bitter frost and the fright?
I have done it, while you were asleep—you were only made for the day.
I have gathered my baby together—and now you may go your way. 20

Nay—for it's kind of you, madam, to sit by an old dying wife.
But say nothing hard of my boy, I have only an hour of life.
I kissed my boy in the prison, before he went out to die.
"They dared me to do it," he said, and he never has told me a lie.
I whipped him for robbing an orchard once when he was but a child— 25
"The farmer dared me to do it," he said; he was always so wild—
And idle—and couldn't be idle—my Willy—he never could rest.
The King should have made him a soldier, he would have been one of his best.

But he lived with a lot of wild mates, and they never would let him be good;
They swore that he dare not rob the mail, and he swore that he would;
And he took no life, but he took one purse, and when all was done 31
He flung it among his fellows—"I'll none of it," said my son.

I came into court to the judge and the lawyers. I told them my tale,
God's own truth—but they killed him, they killed him for robbing the mail.
They hanged him in chains for a show—we had always borne a good name—
To be hanged for a thief—and then put away—isn't that enough shame? 36

Dust to dust—low down—let us hide! but they set him so high
That all the ships of the world could stare at him, passing by.
God'ill pardon the hell-black raven and horrible fowls of the air,
But not the black heart of the lawyer who killed him and hanged him there. 40

And the jailer forced me away. I had bid him my last goodby;
They had fastened the door of his cell. "O mother!" I heard him cry.
I couldn't get back, though I tried; he had something further to say,
And now I never shall know it. The jailer forced me away.

Then since I couldn't but hear that cry of my boy that was dead, 45
They seized me and shut me up; they fastened me down on my bed.
"Mother, O mother!"—he called in the dark to me year after year—
They beat me for that, they beat me—you know that I couldn't but hear;
And then at the last they found I had grown so stupid and still
They let me abroad again—but the creatures had worked their will. 50
Flesh of my flesh was gone, but bone of my bone was left—
I stole them all from the lawyers—and you, will you call it a theft?—
My baby, the bones that had sucked me, the bones that had laughed and had cried—
Theirs? O no! they are mine—not theirs—they had moved in my side.

Do you think I was scared by the bones? I kissed 'em, I buried 'em all— 55
I can't dig deep, I am old—in the night by the churchyard wall.
My Willy 'ill rise up whole when the trumpet of judgment 'ill sound,
But I charge you never to say that I laid him in holy ground.

58. **holy ground**, the churchyard. Executed criminals were not allowed burial in consecrated ground.

They would scratch him up—they would hang him again on the curséd tree.
Sin? O yes, we are sinners, I know—let all that be, 60
And read me a Bible verse of the Lord's goodwill toward men—
"Full of compassion and mercy, the Lord"—let me hear it again;
"Full of compassion and mercy—long-suffering." Yes, O yes!
For the lawyer is born but to murder—the Savior lives but to bless.
He'll never put on the black cap except for the worst of the worst, 65
And the first may be last—I have heard it in church—and the last may be first.
Suffering—oh, long-suffering—yes, as the Lord must know,
Year after year in the mist and the wind and the shower and the snow.

Heard, have you? what? they have told you he never repented his sin.
How do they know it? are *they* his mother? are *you* of his kin? 70
Heard! have you ever heard, when the storm on the downs began,
The wind that 'ill wail like a child and the sea that 'ill moan like a man?

Election, Election, and Reprobation—it's all very well.
But I go tonight to my boy, and I shall not find him in hell.
For I cared so much for my boy that the Lord has looked into my care, 75
And he means me I'm sure to be happy with Willy, I know not where.

And if *he* be lost—but to save *my* soul, that is all your desire—
Do you think that I care for *my* soul if my boy be gone to the fire?
I have been with God in the dark—go, go, you may leave me alone—
You never have borne a child—you are just as hard as a stone. 80

Madam, I beg your pardon! I think that you mean to be kind,
But I cannot hear what you say for my Willy's voice in the wind—
The snow and the sky so bright—he used but to call in the dark,
And he calls to me now from the church and not from the gibbet—for hark!
Nay—you can hear it yourself—it is coming—shaking the walls— 85
Willy—the moon's in a cloud——Good-night. I am going. He calls.

(1880)

73. **Election and Reprobation,** a reference to the Calvinistic belief that God foreordains certain people to be saved and others to sin and eternal punishment.

ALFRED NOYES (1880-)

*THE HIGHWAYMAN

NOTE

The romantic appeal of the highwayman is well expressed in Stevenson's "A Gossip on Romance" (page II-579). In his poem Noyes took a theme which was common enough to the ballad and so developed it as to bring out its inherent romance. In like manner he took the simple ballad stanza and elaborated it until it became much more subtle and powerful than the original stanza as a medium for expressing the emotion aroused by the story. The poem shows a fusion of literary types; it borrows both from the lyric and the ballad whatever is needed to relate the incident in an atmosphere of romantic beauty. In "The Highwayman" the narrative element predominates; in "The Barrel-Organ," the lyric (see page 629). Both poems are romantic, both appeal to the emotions, but from a different point of view.

PART ONE

The wind was a torrent of darkness among the gusty trees,
The moon was a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas,
The road was a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor,
And the highwayman came riding—Riding—riding— 5
The highwayman came riding, up to the old inn-door.

He'd a French cocked-hat on his forehead, a bunch of lace at his chin,
A coat of the claret velvet, and breeches of brown doe-skin;
They fitted with never a wrinkle; his boots were up to the thigh!

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2. **galleon,** a large merchant vessel of medieval and Renaissance times.

And he rode with a jeweled twinkle, 10
His pistol butts a-twinkle,
His rapier hilt a-twinkle, under the jeweled sky.

Over the cobbles he clattered and clashed in the dark inn-yard,
And he tapped with his whip on the shutters, but all was locked and barred;
He whistled a tune to the window, and who should be waiting there 15
But the landlord's black-eyed daughter,
Bess, the landlord's daughter,
Plaiting a dark-red love-knot into her long black hair.

And dark in the dark old inn-yard a stable-wicket creaked
Where Tim the ostler listened; his face was white and peaked; 20
His eyes were hollows of madness, his hair like moldy hay,
But he loved the landlord's daughter,
The landlord's red-lipped daughter.
Dumb as a dog he listened, and he heard the robber say—

"One kiss, my bonny sweetheart; I'm after a prize tonight, 25
But I shall be back with the yellow gold before the morning light;
Yet, if they press me sharply, and harry me through the day,
Then look for me by moonlight,
Watch for me by moonlight,
I'll come to thee by moonlight, though hell should bar the way." 30

He rose upright in the stirrups; he scarce could reach her hand,
But she loosened her hair i' the casement! His face burned like a brand
As the black cascade of perfume came tumbling over his breast;
And he kissed its waves in the moonlight
(Oh, sweet black waves in the moonlight); 35
Then he tugged at his rein in the moonlight, and galloped away to the west.

Part Two

He did not come in the dawning; he did not come at noon;
And out o' the tawny sunset, before the rise o' the moon,
When the road was a gipsy's ribbon, looping the purple moor,
A redcoat troop came marching— 40
Marching—marching—
King George's men came marching, up to the old inn-door.

They said no word to the landlord, they drank his ale instead,
But they gagged his daughter and bound her to the foot of her narrow bed;
Two of them knelt at her casement, with muskets at their side! 45
There was death at every window;
And hell at one dark window;
For Bess could see, through her casement, the road that *he* would ride.

They had tied her up to attention, with many a sniggering jest;
They had bound a musket beside her, with the barrel beneath her breast! 50
"Now keep good watch!" and they kissed her.
She heard the dead man say—
Look for me by moonlight,
Watch for me by moonlight,
I'll come to thee by moonlight, though hell should bar the way! 55

She twisted her hands behind her, but all the knots held good!
She writhed her hands till her fingers were wet with sweat or blood!
They stretched and strained in the darkness, and the hours crawled by like years,
Till, now, on the stroke of midnight,
Cold, on the stroke of midnight, 60
The tip of one finger touched it! The trigger at least was hers!

49. **attention**, the first position of the soldier when preparing to execute any maneuver. The butt of his rifle rests on the ground at his right, and he grasps the barrel in his right hand. In irony, the soldiers bound Bess in this position to watch the return and slaughter of her lover.

The tip of one finger touched it; she strove no more for the rest!
Up, she stood up to attention, with the barrel beneath her breast;
She would not risk their hearing; she would not strive again;
For the road lay bare in the moonlight, 65
Blank and bare in the moonlight;
And the blood of her veins in the moonlight throbbed to her love's refrain.

Tlot-tlot; tlot-tlot! Had they heard it? The horse-hoofs ringing clear;
Tlot-tlot, tlot-tlot, in the distance? Were they deaf that they did not hear?
Down the ribbon of moonlight, over the brow of the hill, 70
The highwayman came riding,
Riding, riding!
The redcoats looked to their priming! She stood up, straight and still!

Tlot-tlot, in the frosty silence! *Tlot-tlot*, in the echoing night!
Nearer he came and nearer! Her face was like a light! 75
Her eyes grew wide for a moment; she drew one last deep breath;
Then her finger moved in the moonlight,
Her musket shattered the moonlight,
Shattered her breast in the moonlight and warned him—with her death.

He turned; he spurred to the west; he did not know who stood 80
Bowed, with her head o'er the musket, drenched with her own red blood!
Not till the dawn he heard it, his face grew gray to hear
How Bess, the landlord's daughter,
The landlord's black-eyed daughter,
Had watched for her love in the moonlight, and died in the darkness there. 85

Back he spurred like a madman, shrieking a curse to the sky,
With the white road smoking behind him and his rapier brandished high!—
Blood-red were his spurs i' the golden noon, wine-red was his velvet coat,
When they shot him down on the highway,
Down like a dog on the highway, 90
And he lay in his blood on the highway, with the bunch of lace at his throat.

* * * * * *

And still of a winter's night, they say, when the wind is in the trees,
When the moon is a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas,
When the road is a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor,
A highwayman comes riding— 95
Riding—riding—
A highwayman comes riding, up to the old inn-door.

Over the cobbles he clatters and clangs in the dark inn-yard;
And he taps with his whip on the shutters, but all is locked and barred;
He whistles a tune to the window, and who should be waiting there 100
But the landlord's black-eyed daughter,
Bess, the landlord's daughter,
Plaiting a dark-red love-knot into her long black hair. (1906)

JOHN MASEFIELD (1874-)

Note

We are too near the narrative poetry of Masefield to evaluate it finally, but for the purposes of this book the place he represents in the development of modern narrative poetry is clear. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the field of human vision seemed to broaden under the stimuli which we have noted in the essay on modern narrative poetry, and the first tendency was for each poet to emphasize the phase which he saw most clearly, as Coleridge did with the supernatural in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. At the beginning of the twentieth century Masefield unified and simplified once more the presentation of the underlying truths of life, and in his narrative poems has portrayed these truths naturally and with tremendous power, partly because he shows how the most awful catastrophes are implicit in the most ordinary events. The average man moving through life oblivious to the forces of Fate, may be caught like a rat in a trap; nor will Fate yield to entreaty. And how superbly remorseless Fate appears in "The River!"

The most fitting introduction to the poem is what Masefield says of it in the preface to the first

volume of his *Poems and Plays*, 1919. "After 'The Wanderer' (in 1913) I wrote 'The River,' a tale current among sailors as having happened in the Hugli River, not far from Calcutta, at some unknown time, not very long ago. I have had versions of the tale from three or four sailors, all agreeing that the ship struck, had her fo'c'sle jammed, and was held on the quicksand for some time, but at last sank, with all her forward hands except one man who dived through a manhole into the hold, as I have described, and by luck or Fate reached the fore hatch and escaped."

Masefield became poet laureate after the death of Robert Bridges in 1930.

*THE RIVER

All other waters have their time of peace,
Calm, or the turn of tide or summer drought;
But on these bars the tumults never cease;
In violent death this river passes out.

Brimming she goes, a bloody-colored rush
Hurrying her heaped disorder, rank on rank, 6
Bubbleless speed so still that in the hush
One hears the mined earth dropping from the bank,

Slipping in little falls whose tingeings drown,
Sunk by the waves forever pressing on,
Till with a stripping crash the tree goes down, 11
Its washing branches flounder and are gone.

Then, roaring out aloud, her water spreads,
Making a desolation where her waves
Shriek and give battle, tossing up their heads, 15
Tearing the shifting sandbanks into graves,

Changing the raddled ruin of her course
So swiftly that the pilgrim on the shore
Hears the loud whirlpool laughing like a horse
Where the scurfed sand was parched an hour before. 20

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8. **mined earth**, etc. As the river current undermines the bank, little cascades of earth pour into the water, tinge its surface for a moment, and disappear. 17. **raddled**, mingled. 20. **scurfed**, cast up, refuse.

And always underneath that heaving tide
The changing bottom runs, or piles, or quakes,
Flinging immense heaps up to wallow wide,
Sucking the surface into whirls like snakes.

If anything should touch that shifting sand, 25
All the blind bottom sucks it till it sinks;
It takes the clipper ere she comes to land,
It takes the thirsting tiger as he drinks.

And on the river pours—it never tires;
Blind, hungry, screaming, day and night the same 30
Purposeless hurry of a million ires,
Mad as the wind, as merciless as flame.

* * * * *

There was a full-rigged ship, the *Travancore*,
Towing to port against that river's rage—
A glittering ship made sparkling for the shore, 35
Taut to the pins in all her equipage.

Clanging, she topped the tide; her sails were furled,
Her men came loitering downward from the yards;
They who had brought her half across the world,
Trampling so many billows into shards, 40

Now looking up, beheld their duty done,
The ship approaching port, the great masts bare,
Gaunt as three giants striding in the sun,
Proud, with the colors tailing out like hair.

So, having coiled their gear, they left the deck; 45
Within the fo'c'sle's gloom of banded steel,

30 ff. **Blind, hungry**, etc. Compare the significance of this description with the descriptions in *Beowulf* and *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. 40. **shards**, fragments.

Mottled like wood with many a painted speck,
They brought their plates and sat about a meal.

Then pushing back the tins, they lit their pipes,
Or slept, or played at cards, or gently spoke; 50
Light from the portholes shot in dusty stripes
Tranquilly moving, sometimes blue with smoke.

These sunbeams sidled when the vessel rolled;
Their lazy dust-strips crossed the floor,
Lighting a man-hole leading to the hold, 55
A man-hole leaded down the day before.

Like gold the solder on the man-hole shone;
A few flies threading in a drowsy dance
Slept in their pattern, darted, and were gone.
The river roared against the ship's advance. 60

And quietly sleep came upon the crew,
Man by man drooped upon his arms and slept;
Without, the tugboat dragged the vessel through,
The rigging whined, the yelling water leapt,

Till blindly a careering wave's collapse 65
Rose from beneath her bows and spouted high,
Spirting the fo'c's'le floor with noisy slaps;
A sleeper at the table heaved a sigh,

And lurched, half-drunk with sleep, across the floor,
Muttering and blinking like a man insane, 70
Cursed at the river's tumult, shut the door,
Blinked, and lurched back and fell asleep again.

Then there was greater silence in the room;
Ship's creakings ran along the beams and died;
The lazy sunbeams loitered up the gloom, 75
Stretching and touching till they reached the side.

* * * * *

Yet something jerking in the vessel's course
Told that the tug was getting her in hand,
As, at a fence, one steadies down a horse,
To rush the whirlpool on Magellan Sand; 80

And in the uneasy water just below
Her Mate inquired if the men should stir
And come on deck? Her Captain answered, "No,
Let them alone; the tug can manage her."

Then, as she settled down and gathered speed, 85
Her Mate inquired again if they should come
"Just to be ready there in case of need,
Since, on such godless bars, there might be some."

But "No," the Captain said, "the men have been
Boxing about since midnight; let them be. 90
The pilot's able and the ship's a queen;
The hands can rest until we come to quay."

They ceased; they took their stations. Right ahead
The whirlpool heaped and sucked; in tenor tone
The steady leadsman chanted at the lead; 95
The ship crept forward trembling to the bone.

And just above the worst a passing wave
Brought to the line such unexpected stress

That as she tossed her bows her towrope gave,
Snapped at the collar like a stalk of cress. 100

Then, for a ghastly moment, she was loose,
Blind in the whirlpool, groping for a guide;
Swinging adrift without a moment's truce,
She struck the sand and fell upon her side.

And instantly the sand beneath her gave 105
So that she righted and again was flung,
Grinding the quicksand open for a grave,
Straining her masts until the steel was sprung.

The foremast broke; its mighty bulk of steel
Fell on the fo'c'sle door and jammed it tight; 110
The sand-rush heaped her to an even keel,
She settled down, resigned, she made no fight,

But like an overladen beast, she lay
Dumb in the mud with billows at her lips,
Broken, where she had fallen in the way,
Grinding her grave among the bones of ships. 116

* * * * *

At the first crashing of the mast the men
Sprang from their sleep to hurry to the deck;
They found that Fate had caught them in a pen;
The door that opened out was jammed with wreck. 120

Then, as, with shoulders down, their gathered strength
Hove on the door, but could not make it stir,
They felt the vessel tremble through her length;
The tug, made fast again, was plucking her,

Plucking, and causing motion, till it seemed 125
That she would get her off; they heard her screw
Mumble the bubbled rip-rap as she steamed;
"Please God, the tug will shift her!" said the crew.

"She's off!" the seamen said; they felt her glide,
Scraping the bottom with her bilge, until 130
Something collapsing clanged along her side;
The scraping stopped; the tugboat's screw was still.

"She's holed!" a voice without cried; "holed and jammed—
Holed on the old *Magellan*, sunk last June.
I lose my ticket and the men are damned; 135
They'll drown like rats unless we free them soon.

"My God, they shall not!" and the speaker beat
Blows with a crow upon the foremast's wreck;
Minute steel splinters fell about his feet,
No tremor stirred the ruin on the deck. 140

And as their natures bade, the seamen learned
That they were doomed within that buried door;
Some cursed, some raved, but one among them turned
Straight to the manhole leaded in the floor,

And sitting down astride it, drew his knife, 145
And staidly dug to pick away the lead,
While at the ports his fellows cried for life:
"Burst in the door, or we shall all be dead!"

138. **crow**, crowbar.

For like a brook the leak below them clucked.
They felt the vessel settling; they could feel 150
How the blind bog beneath her gripped and sucked.
Their fingers beat their prison walls of steel.

And then the gurgling stopped—the ship was still.
She stayed; she sank no deeper—an arrest
Fothered the pouring leak; she ceased to fill. 155
She trod the mud, drowned only to the breast.

And probing at the well, the captain found
The leak no longer rising, so he cried:
"She is not sinking—you will not be drowned;
The shifting sand has silted up her side. 160

"Now there is time. The tug shall put ashore
And fetch explosives to us from the town;
I'll burst the house or blow away the door
(It will not kill you if you all lie down).

"Be easy in your minds, for you'll be free 165
As soon as we've the blast." The seamen heard
The tug go townwards, butting at the sea;
Some lit their pipes; the youngest of them cheered.

But still the digger bent above the lid,
Gouging the solder from it as at first, 170
Pecking the lead, intent on what he did;
The other seamen mocked at him or cursed.

And some among them nudged him as he picked.
He cursed them, grinning, but resumed his game;
His knife-point sometimes struck the lid and clicked. 175
The solder-pellets shone like silver flame.

And still his knife-blade clicked like ticking time
Counting the hour till the tug's return;
And still the ship stood steady on the slime,
While Fate above her fingered with her urn. 180

* * * * *

Then from the tug beside them came the hail:
"They have none at the stores, nor at the dock,
Nor at the quarry, so I tried the jail.
They thought they had, but it was out of stock. 184

"So then I telephoned to town; they say
They've sent an engine with some to the pier;
I did not leave till it was on its way;
A tug is waiting there to bring it here.

"It can't be here, though, for an hour or more;
I've lost an hour in trying, as it is. 190
For want of thought commend me to the shore.
You'd think they'd know their river's ways by this."

"So there is nothing for it but to wait,"
The Captain answered, fuming. "Until then,
We'd better go to dinner, Mr. Mate." 195
The cook brought dinner forward to the men.

* * * * *

Another hour of prison loitered by;
The strips of sunlight stiffened at the port,
But still the digger made the pellets fly,
Paying no heed to his companions' sport, 200

155. **Fothered,** stopped. This is usually done by hauling a collision mat over the hole. 160. **silted,** choked up.

196. **The cook,** etc. The food could be passed through portholes which were too small to allow a man to climb out.

While they, about him, spooning at their tins,
Asked if he dug because he found it cold,
Or whether it was penance for his sins,
Or hope of treasure in the forward hold.

He grinned and cursed, but did not cease to pick; 205
His sweat dropped from him when he bent his head;
His knife-blade quarried down, till with a click
Its grinded thinness snapped against the lead.

Then, dully rising, brushing back his sweat,
He asked his fellows for another knife. 210
"Never," they said; "man, what d'ye hope to get?"
"Nothing," he said, "except a chance for life."

"Havers," they said, and one among them growled,
"You'll get no knife from any here to break.
You've dug the manhole since the door was fouled, 215
And now your knife's broke, quit, for Jesus' sake."

But one, who smelt a bargain, changed his tone,
Offering a sheath-knife for the task in hand
At twenty times its value, as a loan
To be repaid him when they reached the land. 220

And there was jesting at the lender's greed
And mockery at the digger's want of sense,
Closing with such a bargain without need,
Since in an hour the tug would take them thence.

But "Right," the digger said. The deal was made. 225
He took the borrowed knife, and sitting down
Gouged at the channeled solder with the blade,
Saying, "Let be; it's better dig than drown."

And nothing happened for a while; the heat
Grew in the stuffy room, the sunlight slid,
Flies buzzed about and jostled at the meat, 231
The knife-blade clicked upon the manhole lid.

And one man said, "She takes a hell of time
Bringing the blaster," and another snored;
One, between pipe-puffs, hummed a smutty rime; 235
One, who was weaving, thudded with his sword.

It was as though the ship were in a dream,
Caught in a magic ocean, calm like death,
Tranced, till a presence should arise and gleam,
Making the waters conscious with her breath. 240

It was so drowsy that the river's cries,
Roaring aloud their ever-changing tune,
Came to those sailors like a drone of flies,
Filling with sleep the summer afternoon;

So that they slept, or, if they spoke, it was 245
Only to worry lest the tug should come;
Such power upon the body labor has
That prison seemed a blessed rest to some,

Till one man leaning at the porthole, stared,
Checking his yawning at the widest stretch, 250
Then blinked and swallowed, while he muttered, scared,
"That blasting-cotton takes an age to fetch."

213. **Havers.** "nonsense."

236. **thudded**, etc., in order to pound into compact form what he had woven.

Then swiftly passing from the port he went
Up and then down the fo'c'sle till he stayed,
Fixed at the porthole with his eyes intent, 255
Round-eyed and white, as if he were afraid,

And muttered as he stared, "My God! she is.
She's deeper than she was, she's settling down;
That palm-tree top was steady against this,
And now I see the quay below the town. 260

"Look here at her. She's sinking in her tracks.
She's going down by inches as she stands;
The water's darker and it stinks like flax;
Her going down is churning up the sands."

And instantly a panic took the crew; 265
Even the digger blenched. His knife-blade's haste
Cutting the solder witnessed that he knew
Time on the brink with not a breath to waste.

While far away the tugboat at the quay
Under her drooping pennon waited still 270
For that explosive which would set them free,
Free, with the world a servant to their will.

Then from a boat beside them came a blare,
Urging that tugboat to be quick; and men
Shouted to stir her from her waiting there, 275
"Hurry the blast, and get us out of pen.

276 **pen**, jail.

"She's going down. She's going down, man! Quick!"
The tugboat did not stir, no answer came;
They saw her tongue-like pennon idly lick
Clear for an instant, lettered with her name, 280

Then droop again. The engine had not come,
The blast had not arrived. The prisoned hands
Saw her still waiting though their time had come;
Their ship was going down among the sands,

Going so swiftly now that they could see 285
The banks arising as she made her bed;
Full of sick sound she settled deathward, she
Gurgled and shook, the digger picked the lead.

And, as she paused to take a final plunge,
Prone like a half-tide rock, the men on deck 290
Jumped to their boats and left, ere like a sponge
The river's rotten heart absorbed the wreck;

And on the perilous instant ere Time struck
The digger's work was done, the lead was cleared.
He cast the manhole up; below it muck 295
Floated, the hold was full, the water leered.

All of his labor had but made a hole
By which to leap to death; he saw black dust
Float on the bubbles of that brimming bowl;
He drew a breath and took his life in trust, 300

279. **pennon**, pennant; a very long triangular flag.
298. **he saw**, etc. Compare this situation with that of Beowulf as he plunges into Grendel's tarn.

And plunged headforemost into that black pit,
Where floating cargo bumped against the beams.
He groped a choking passage blind with grit;
The roaring in his ears was shot with screams.

So, with a bursting heart and roaring ears 305
He floundered in that sunk ship's inky womb,
Drowned in deep water for what seemed like years,
Buried alive and groping through the tomb,

Till suddenly the beams against his back
Gave, and the water on his eyes was bright; 310
He shot up through a hatchway foul with wrack
Into clean air and life and dazzling light;

And striking out, he saw the fo'c'sle gone,
Vanished, below the water, and the mast
Standing columnar from the sea; it shone 315
Proud, with its colors flying to the last.

And all about, a many-wrinkled tide
Smoothed and erased its eddies, wandering chilled,
Like glutted purpose, trying to decide
If its achievement had been what it willed. 320

And men in boats were there; they helped him in.
He gulped for breath and watched that patch of smooth,
Shaped like the vessel, wrinkle into grin,
Furrow to waves, and bare a yellow tooth.

Then the masts leaned until the shroud-screws gave. 325
All disappeared—her masts, her colors, all.

325 **shroud-screws gave.** The shrouds give lateral support to the masts, and when strained too much the screws snap.

He saw the yardarms tilting to the grave;
He heard the siren of a tugboat call,

And saw her speeding, foaming at the bow,
Bringing the blast-charge that had come too late. 330
He heard one shout, "It isn't wanted now."
Time's minute-hand had been the hand of Fate.

Then the boats turned; they brought him to the shore.
Men crowded round him, touched him, and were kind;
The Mate walked with him, silent, to the store. 335
He said, "We've left the best of us behind."

Then, as he wrung his sodden clothes, the Mate
Gave him a drink of rum, and talked awhile
Of men and ships and unexpected Fate;
And darkness came and cloaked the river's guile, 340

So that its huddled hurry was not seen,
Only made louder, till the full moon climbed
Over the forest, floated, and was queen.
Within the town a temple-belfry chimed.

Then, upon silent pads, a tiger crept 345
Down to the river-brink, and crouching there
Watched it intently, till you thought he slept
But for his ghastly eye and stiffened hair.

Then, trembling at a lust more fell than his,
He roared and bounded back to coverts lone, 350
Where, among moonlit beauty, slaughter is,
Filling the marvelous night with myriad groan.

(1913)

GILBERT KEITH CHESTERTON
(1874-)

*LEPANTO

NOTE

This poem is a modern treatment of the heroic, but it is by no means as simple as the ancient heroic narrative poetry. Although it has a unified plot and employs descriptive phrases, after the general manner of the popular ballad, neither plot nor diction is simple and transparent. Chesterton is here a mystic, and "Lepanto" symbolizes the end of the Crusading spirit and the downfall of chivalry. The rhythm and diction are subtle. Though strongly marked, the rhythm is frequently modulated, and the diction is characterized by mystical and allusive word pictures instead of by the stereotyped epithets of heroic narrative poetry. The total effect is unified by the swing of the verse, the figure of the hero, and the brilliant descriptions, but underneath lies an elaborate and diversified current of literary allusion. The rhythmic swing and *tempo* are like those of many of the poems of Vachel Lindsay (see page 690).

White founts falling in the Courts of the sun,
And the Soldan of Byzantium is smiling as they run;
There is laughter like the fountains in that face of all men feared,
It stirs the forest darkness, the darkness of his beard,
It curls the blood-red crescent, the crescent of his lips, 5
For the inmost sea of all the earth is shaken with his ships.
They have dared the white republics up the capes of Italy,
They have dashed the Adriatic round the Lion of the Sea,
And the Pope has cast his arms abroad for agony and loss,
And called the kings of Christendom for swords about the Cross. 10
The cold queen of England is looking in the glass;
The shadow of the Valois is yawning at the Mass;
From evening isles fantastical rings faint the Spanish gun,
And the Lord upon the Golden Horn is laughing in the sun.

Dim drums throbbing, in the hills half heard, 15
Where only on a nameless throne a crownless prince has stirred,
Where, risen from a doubtful seat and half attainted stall,
The last knight of Europe takes weapons from the wall,
The last and lingering troubadour to whom the bird has sung,
That once went singing southward when all the world was young. 20
In that enormous silence, tiny and unafraid,
Comes up along a winding road the noise of the Crusade.
Strong gongs groaning as the guns boom far,
Don John of Austria is going to the war,
Stiff flags straining in the night-blasts cold, 25
In the gloom black-purple, in the glint old-gold,
Torchlight crimson on the copper kettle-drums,
Then the tuckets, then the trumpets, then the cannon, and he comes.
Don John laughing in the brave beard curled,

Lepanto.* During the sixteenth century the Turkish power reached its height in the Mediterranean. The conquest of Cyprus and the devastation of Italian and Spanish shipping by the Turks caused Spain and Venice to form a holy league under the leadership of Pope Pius V. With a fleet of about two hundred ships, Don Juan of Austria (1545-1578), a brilliant natural son of Charles V (Holy Roman emperor and king of Spain under the title Charles I), and half-brother of Philip II, met a Turkish fleet of equal force off Lepanto, on the north side of the Corinthian Straits, on October 7, 1571, and defeated it overwhelmingly. Thereafter the Turkish power began to wane. 1. **Courts of the sun, the palace of the Sultan, in Constantinople. 2. **Soldan of Byzantium**, sultan of the Byzantine empire. "Byzantium" was the ancient name for Constantinople. 7. **white republics**, the seaport Italian towns of the Adriatic, chief of which was Venice. 8. **Lion of the Sea.** The patron saint of Venice was St. Mark the Evangelist, whose bones are supposed to be buried there. His symbol is the lion. 9. **the Pope**, Pius V, who reigned from 1566-1585.

10. **for swords about the Cross**, for a Crusade. 11. **The cold queen of England**, Elizabeth. 12. **The shadow of the Valois.** Probably Henry of Navarre, leader of the French Protestant, or Huguenot, party against the Valois, or reigning Catholic dynasty of France. He became king of France in 1589 and was converted to Catholicism. 13. **evening isles fantastical**, the wide-flung possessions of Spain, especially in the western world. 14. **Lord upon the Golden Horn**, the sultan. The Golden Horn is part of the harbor of Constantinople. 16. **Where only**, etc. See note on *Lepanto* above. Don Juan was acknowledged at the Spanish court as Charles's son, and called by the title Don Juan of Austria, but he was never recognized as "infante," or royal prince. 17. **half attainted**, half stained because of his illegitimacy. **stall**, one of the carved seats in the choir of a church designated for the officiating clergy, for the choir, or for royalty. 19. **troubadour**, etc. The age of the troubadours and of chivalry was dying. It was a convention of the troubadours to profess that their sweetest melodies were learned from the song of birds. 28. **tucket**, a flourish of trumpets.

Spurning of his stirrups like the thrones
of all the world, 30
Holding his head up for a flag of all the
free.
Love-light of Spain—hurrah!
Death-light of Africa!
Don John of Austria
Is riding to the sea. 35

Mahound is in his paradise above the
evening star;
(*Don John of Austria is going to the war.*)
He moves a mighty turban on the time-
less houri's knees,
His turban that is woven of the sunsets
and the seas.
He shakes the peacock gardens as he
rises from his ease, 40
And he strides among the tree-tops and
is taller than the trees,
And his voice through all the garden is
a thunder sent to bring
Black Azrael and Ariel and Ammon on
the wing.
Giants and the Genii,
Multiplex of wing and eye, 45
Whose strong obedience broke the sky
When Solomon was king.

They rush in red and purple from the
red clouds of the morn,
From temples where the yellow gods
shut up their eyes in scorn;
They rise in green robes roaring from
the green hells of the sea, 50
Where fallen skies and evil hues and
eyeless creatures be;
On them the sea-valves cluster and the
gray sea-forests curl,
Splashed with a splendid sickness, the
sickness of the pearl;
They swell in sapphire smoke out of the
blue cracks of the ground—
They gather and they wonder and give
worship to Mahound. 55
And he saith, "Break up the mountains
where the hermit-folk can hide,
And sift the red and silver sands lest
bone of saint abide,
And chase the Giaours flying night and
day, not giving rest,
For that which was our trouble comes
again out of the west.
We have set the seal of Solomon on all
things under sun, 60
Of knowledge and of sorrow and en-
durance of things done,
But a noise is in the mountains, in the
mountains, and I know
The voice that shook our palaces—
four hundred years ago:
It is he that saith not 'Kismet'; it is he
that knows not Fate;
It is Richard, it is Raymond, it is God-
frey in the gate! 65
It is he whose loss is laughter when he
counts the wager worth,
Put down your feet upon him, that our
peace be on the earth."
For he heard drums groaning and he
heard guns jar,
(*Don John of Austria is going to the war.*)
Sudden and still—hurrah! 70
Bolt from Iberia!
Don John of Austria
Is gone by Alcalar.

St. Michael's on his Mountain in the
sea-roads of the north
(*Don John of Austria is girt and going
forth.*) 75
Where the gray seas glitter and the
sharp tides shift
And the sea-folk labor and the red sails
lift.

33. **Death-light of Africa.** Don Juan's first command had been in 1568 against the Algerian pirates. 36. **Mahound,** Mahomet. 38. **houri.** There are very many of these beautiful female spirits in the Mohammedan paradise. 43. **Azrael,** etc. In the Mohammedan religion God is attended by certain mighty angels, among whom are Gabriel, Azrael—the angel of death—Ariel, Israfel—the angel of the resurrection—and Ammon. 44. **Giants and Genii.** In the Mohammedan religion there are spirits of evil, most interesting of whom are the Genii, or Jinni, who are said to be created from smokeless fire and to inhabit it. The *Arabian Nights' Tales* are filled with allusions to them. 47. **Solomon.** The Koran records how he curbed the Jinni by means of his signet or seal ring. 53. **sickness of the pearl,** an allusion to the old belief that in diseased oysters alone would be found pearls.

58. **Giaours,** infidels. 60. **seal of Solomon,** a mystical sign made of two interlaced triangles in the form of a six-pointed star, symbolizing the union of body and soul. With it Solomon ruled the Jinni. 63. **four hundred years ago,** when the Crusades began. 64. **Kismet,** the oriental word for *fate.* 65. **Richard,** Richard I, Coeur de Lion, king of England, 1189-1199. He participated in the Third Crusade (1189-1192). **Raymond . . . Godfrey.** Raymond of Toulouse and Godfrey of Bouillon were among the leaders of the First Crusade (1096-1099). 71. **Iberia,** the ancient name for the Spanish peninsula. 73. **Alcalar,** or Alcala, near Madrid. It contains a university, in which Don Juan was educated. 74. **St. Michael,** etc. St. Michael's Mount is an island off the coast of Normandy, where St. Michael was supposed once to have appeared. He was regarded as one of the warrior archangels of God. Cf. *Paradise Lost,* Book VI, line 44 (page 89).

He shakes his lance of iron and he claps
his wings of stone;
The noise is gone through Normandy;
the noise is gone alone;
The North is full of tangled things and
texts and aching eyes 80
And dead is all the innocence of anger
and surprise,
And Christian killeth Christian in a
narrow dusty room,
And Christian dreadeth Christ that hath
a newer face of doom,
And Christian hateth Mary that God
kissed in Galilee,
But Don John of Austria is riding to the
sea. 85
Don John calling through the blast and
the eclipse,
Crying with the trumpet, with the trum-
pet of his lips,
Trumpet that sayeth ha!
Domino gloria!
Don John of Austria 90
Is shouting to the ships.

King Philip's in his closet with the
Fleece about his neck,
(*Don John of Austria is armed upon the
deck.*)
The walls are hung with velvet that is
black and soft as sin,
And little dwarfs creep out of it and
little dwarfs creep in. 95
He holds a crystal phial that has colors
like the moon,
He touches, and it tingles, and he
trembles very soon,
And his face is as a fungus of a leprous
white and gray
Like plants in the high houses that are
shuttered from the day,
And death is in the phial and the end of
noble work, 100
But Don John of Austria has fired upon
the Turk.
Don John's hunting, and his hounds
have bayed—
Booms away past Italy the rumor of his
raid.
Gun upon gun, ha! ha!
Gun upon gun, hurrah! 105
Don John of Austria
Has loosed the cannonade.

The Pope was in his chapel before day
or battle broke,
(*Don John of Austria is hidden in the
smoke.*)
The hidden room in man's house where
God sits all the year, 110
The secret window whence the world
looks small and very dear.
He sees as in a mirror on the monstrous
twilight sea
The crescent of his cruel ships whose
name is mystery;
They fling great shadows foe-wards,
making Cross and Castle dark,
They veil the pluméd lions on the gal-
leys of St. Mark; 115
And above, the ships are palaces of
brown, black-bearded chiefs,
And below, the ships are prisons, where
with multitudinous griefs,
Christian captives sick and sunless, all
a laboring race repines
Like a race in sunken cities, like a na-
tion in the mines.
They are lost like slaves that swat, and
in the skies of morning hung 120
The stair-ways of the tallest gods when
tyranny was young.
They are countless, voiceless, hopeless
as those fallen or fleeing on
Before the high King's horses in the
granite of Babylon.
And many a one grows witless in his
quiet room in hell
Where a yellow face looks inward
through the lattice of his cell, 125
And he finds his God forgotten, and he
seeks no more a sign—

80. **The North**, etc. The following lines refer to the effects of the Reformation, the stern picture of Christ and the Last Judgment evoked by the Calvinists, and their turning away from the medieval reverence for Mary, the Mother of God. 89. **Domino gloria!** Glory to God. 92. **King Philip**, Philip II of Spain. **Fleece**, the Spanish Order of the Golden Fleece. 96. **crystal phial.** Philip has been accused of employing poison to eliminate his mad son, Don Carlos, and his enemies.

108. **The Pope**, Pius V. 113. **The crescent**, the symbol of the Mohammedans. 114. **Cross and Castle.** The Cross was on the Arms of Aragon, and the Castle on the Arms of Castille. At Lepanto the fleet was made up of the Spanish and Venetian navies. 115. **lions on the galleys**, etc., the Venetian fleet. 116. **palaces.** In the upper cabins lived the Moslem commanders. 117. **prisons**, the lower parts of the ship where galley slaves were kept for years as rowers. 120. **swat**, sweated. 123. **Before the high King's horses**, etc. In Babylonian bas-reliefs the king is pictured as driving countless foes in flight before his chariot.

(*But Don John of Austria has burst the battle-line!*)
Don John pounding from the slaughter-painted poop,
Purpling all the ocean like a bloody pirate's sloop,
Scarlet running over on the silvers and the golds, 130
Breaking of the hatches up and bursting of the holds,
Thronging of the thousands up that labor under sea
White for bliss and blind for sun and stunned for liberty.
Vivat Hispania!
Domino gloria! 135
Don John of Austria
Has set his people free!

Cervantes on his galley sets the sword back in the sheath,
(*Don John of Austria rides homeward with a wreath.*)
And he sees across a weary land a straggling road in Spain, 140
Up which a lean and foolish knight forever rides in vain,
And he smiles, but not as Sultans smile, and settles back the blade. . . .
(*But Don John of Austria rides home from the Crusade.*) (1915)

134. Vivat Hispania! Long live Spain. **138. Cervantes** (1547-1616), the author of *Don Quixote*, in which he humorously contrasts the ideals of chivalry with the facts of real life. Cervantes fought at Lepanto, and it is peculiarly fitting to close this account of the last crusade—if it may be so called—made by the last Spanish troubadour and knight of chivalry, with a mention of the man who made the code of chivalry an object of mirth.

THOMAS HARDY (1840-1928)

Note

Hardy is better known as a novelist than as a poet, but in his poetry he portrays the same relentless, ironical fate that molds and controls the destinies of man in his novels. In the *Satires of Circumstance* we see first what seems to be, and then, often by a slight turn of events, what really is. Whether the revelation is amusing, saddening, or horrifying, the reader must decide for himself. The only comment needed is that the interest centers rather upon the element of surprise or contrast than upon the story itself.

SATIRES OF CIRCUMSTANCE

*IN FIFTEEN GLIMPSES

I. At Tea

The kettle descants in a cosy drone,
And the young wife looks in her husband's face,
And then at her guest's, and shows in her own
Her sense that she fills an envied place;
And the visiting lady is all abloom, 5
And says there was never so sweet a room.

And the happy young housewife does not know
That the woman beside her was first his choice,
Till the fates ordained it could not be so . . .
Betraying nothing in look or voice, 10
The guest sits smiling and sips her tea,
And he throws her a stray glance yearningly.

II. In Church

"And now to God the Father," he ends,
And his voice thrills up to the topmost tiles.
Each listener chokes as he bows and bends,
And emotion pervades the crowded aisles.
Then the preacher glides to the vestry-door, 5
And shuts it, and thinks he is seen no more.

The door swings softly ajar meanwhile,
And a pupil of his in the Bible class,
Who adores him as one without gloss or guile,
Sees her idol stand with a satisfied smile 10
And reënact at the vestry-glass
Each pulpit gesture in deft dumb-show
That had moved the congregation so.

* Seven are here reprinted.

III. By Her Aunt's Grave

"Sixpence a week," says the girl to her lover,
"Aunt used to bring me, for she could confide
In me alone, she vowed. 'Twas to cover
The cost of her headstone when she died.
And that was a year ago last June; 5
I've not yet fixed it. But I must soon."

"And where is the money now, my dear?"
"Oh, snug in my purse . . Aunt was so slow
In saving it—eighty weeks, or near."
"Let's spend it," he hints. "For she won't know. 10
There's a dance tonight at the Load of Hay."
She passively nods. And they go that way.

IV. In the Room of the Bride-Elect

"Would it had been the man of our wish!"
Sighs her mother. To whom with vehemence she
In the wedding-dress—the wife to be—
"Then why were you so mollyish
As not to insist on him for me!" 5
The mother, amazed: "Why, dearest one,
Because you pleaded for this or none!"

"But father and you should have stood out strong!
Since then, to my cost, I have lived to find
That you were right and that I was wrong; 10
This man is a dolt to the one declined . .
Ah!—here he comes with his buttonhole rose.
Good God—I must marry him, I suppose!"

VII. Outside the Window

"My stick!" he says and turns in the lane
To the house just left, whence a vixen voice
Comes out with the firelight through the pane,
And he sees within that the girl of his choice
Stands rating her mother with eyes aglare 5
For something said while he was there.

"At last I behold her soul undraped!"
Thinks the man who had loved her more than himself;
"My God!—'tis but narrowly I have escaped—
My precious porcelain proves it delf." 10
His face has reddened like one ashamed,
And he steals off, leaving his stick unclaimed.

XII. At the Draper's

"I stood at the back of the shop, my dear,
But you did not perceive me.
Well, when they deliver what you were shown
I shall know nothing of it, believe me!"

And he coughed and coughed as she paled and said, 5
"Oh, I didn't see you come in there—
Why couldn't you speak?"—"Well, I didn't. I left
That you should not notice I'd been there.

"You were viewing some lovely things.
'*Soon required for a widow of latest fashion*';
And I knew 'twould upset you to meet the man
Who had to be cold and ashen,

"And screwed in a box before they could dress you
'*In the last new note in mourning*,' 15
As they defined it. So, not to distress you,
I left you to your adorning."

XIII. On the Death-Bed

"I'll tell—being past all praying for—
Then promptly die . . . He was out at the war,

10. **delf**, Dutch pottery glazed over white or brown clay. In England it is much used as common household ware.

At the Draper's. Title, **draper's**, a cloth or clothing shop.

On the Death-Bed. Cf. "The Eve of St. John" (page 257).

And got some scent of the intimacy
That was under way between her and me;
And he stole back home, and appeared like a ghost 5
One night, at the very time almost
That I reached her house. Well, I shot him dead,
And secretly buried him. Nothing was said.

"The news of the battle came next day;
He was scheduled missing. I hurried away, 10
Got out there, visited the field,
And sent home word that a search revealed
He was one of the slain; though, lying alone
And stript, his body had not been known.

"But she suspected. I lost her love, 15
Yea, my hope of earth, and of heaven above;
And my time's now come, and I'll pay the score,
Though it be burning for evermore."

(1911)

EDGAR LEE MASTERS (1868-)

From SPOON RIVER ANTHOLOGY

Note

Before Edgar Lee Masters wrote *Spoon River Anthology* and Edgar Arlington Robinson wrote his narrative poems, the contribution of America to modern narrative poetry had not been considerable. The New England group of the latter part of the nineteenth century had imitated rather well the ballad or romance type, but Whitman and Poe, who could best, perhaps, have coöperated in the new phase of narrative poetry, did not do so, for both were essentially autobiographic and lyric. Both poets apparently preferred to express an emotional reaction to an incident instead of relating the incident itself, and in "The Raven" the tone is that of a lyrical ballad rather than what we have designated as modern narrative poetry. *Spoon River Anthology* was published, poem by poem, in Reedy's *Mirror* during 1914. In two hundred fourteen short autobiographical monologues in free verse, the spirits of former inhabitants of a little Western town tell what life brought them, and what they think of it, now that the race is run. The form is not a dramatic monologue such as Browning employed, for the characters of Mr. Masters speak in retrospect without present emotional reaction. The poems are therefore reflective rather than dramatic narratives.

*PAULINE BARRETT

Almost the shell of a woman after the surgeon's knife!
And almost a year to creep back into strength,
Till the dawn of our wedding decennial
Found me my seeming self again.
We walked the forest together, 5
By a path of soundless moss and turf.
But I could not look in your eyes,
And you could not look in my eyes,
For such sorrow was ours—the beginning of gray in your hair,
And I but a shell of myself. 10
And what did we talk of?—sky and water,
Anything, 'most, to hide our thoughts.
And then your gift of wild roses,
Set on the table to grace our dinner.
Poor heart, how bravely you struggled 15
To imagine and live a remembered rapture!
Then my spirit drooped as the night came on,
And you left me alone in my room for a while,
As you did when I was a bride, poor heart.
And I looked in the mirror and something said: 20
"One should be all dead when one is half-dead—
Nor ever mock life, nor ever cheat love."
And I did it looking there in the mirror—
Dear, have you ever understood?

*BERT KESSLER

I winged my bird,
Though he flew toward the setting sun;
But just as the shot rang out, he soared
Up and up through the splinters of golden light,
Till he turned right over, feathers ruffled, 5

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With some of the down of him floating near,
And fell like a plummet into the grass.
I tramped about, parting the tangles,
Till I saw a splash of blood on a stump,
And the quail lying close to the rotten roots. 10
I reached my hand, but saw no brier,
But something pricked and stung and numbed it.
And then, in a second, I spied the rattler—
The shutters wide in his yellow eyes,
And the head of him arched, sunk back in the rings of him, 15
A circle of filth, the color of ashes,
Or oak leaves bleached under layers of leaves.
I stood like a stone as he shrank and uncoiled
And started to crawl beneath the stump,
When I fell limp in the grass.

*SEARCY FOOTE

I wanted to go away to college,
But rich Aunt Persis wouldn't help me.
So I made gardens and raked the lawns
And bought John Alden's books with my earnings
And toiled for the very means of life. 5
I wanted to marry Delia Prickett,
But how could I do it with what I earned?
And there was Aunt Persis more than seventy,
Who sat in a wheel-chair half alive,
With her throat so paralyzed, when she swallowed 10
The soup ran out of her mouth like a duck—
A gourmand yet, investing her income
In mortgages, fretting all the time
About her notes and rents and papers.
That day I was sawing wood for her, 15
And reading Proudhon in between.
I went in the house for a drink of water,
And there she sat asleep in her chair,
And Proudhon lying on the table,
And a bottle of chloroform on the book, 20
She used sometimes for an aching tooth!
I poured the chloroform on a handkerchief
And held it to her nose till she died.—
O Delia, Delia, you and Proudhon
Steadied my hand, and the coroner 25
Said she died of heart failure.
I married Delia and got the money—
A joke on you, Spoon River?

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16. **Proudhon.** Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865) was a celebrated French socialist, who was a leading spirit in the revolution of 1848. His two best-known works are *What Is Property* and *System of Economic Contradictions or the Philosophy of Poverty.*

*LUCINDA MATLOCK

I went to the dances at Chandlerville,
And played snap-out at Winchester.
One time we changed partners,
Driving home in the moonlight of middle June,
And then I found Davis. 5
We were married and lived together for seventy years,
Enjoying, working, raising the twelve children,
Eight of whom we lost
Ere I had reached the age of sixty.
I spun, I wove, I kept the house, I nursed the sick, 10
I made the garden, and for holiday
Rambled over the fields where sang the larks,
And by Spoon River gathering many a shell,
And many a flower and medicinal weed—
Shouting to the wooded hills, singing to the green valleys. 15
At ninety-six I had lived enough, that is all,
And passed to a sweet repose.
What is this I hear of sorrow and weariness,
Anger, discontent, and drooping hopes?
Degenerate sons and daughters, 20
Life is too strong for you—
It takes life to love Life.

(1914)

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AMY LOWELL (1874-1925)

PATTERNS

NOTE

Robert Browning, Edgar Lee Masters, and Amy Lowell have employed the monologue as a medium for narrative poetry. In Browning the predominating tendency is to be dramatic, in Mr. Masters to be reflective. Miss Lowell could do both equally well. In "Patterns" the emotion of the young lady who has just received word of the death of her betrothed finds expression in an irregular but strongly accentual free verse, with many repetitions of word and phrase. But Miss Lowell was not content to record merely the emotions of the situation. The young lady in her grief contrasts her world as it looked when her fiancé was alive and as it looks now that he is dead. Moreover, she foresees what that world will make of her in the future as its victim. Emotion and reflection are subtly combined, as she recalls the incidents of her courtship and looks about her at the symbols of the world of custom as it closes in upon her.

I walk down the garden paths,
And all the daffodils
Are blowing, and the bright blue squills.
I walk down the patterned garden paths
In my stiff, brocaded gown. 5

With my powdered hair and jeweled fan,
I, too, am a rare
Pattern. As I wander down
The garden paths.
My dress is richly figured, 10
And the train
Makes a pink and silver stain
On the gravel, and the thrift
Of the borders.
Just a plate of current fashion, 15
Tripping by in high-heeled, ribboned shoes.
Not a softness anywhere about me,
Only whalebone and brocade.
And I sink on a seat in the shade
Of a lime tree. For my passion 20
Wars against the stiff brocade.
The daffodils and squills
Flutter in the breeze
As they please.
And I weep; 25
For the lime tree is in blossom
And one small flower has dropped upon my bosom.

3. squill, a small bulbous flower like a tulip or lily.

And the plashing of waterdrops
In the marble fountain
Comes down the garden paths. 30
The dripping never stops.
Underneath my stiffened gown
Is the softness of a woman bathing in a marble basin,
A basin in the midst of hedges grown
So thick she cannot see her lover hiding, 35
But she guesses he is near,
And the sliding of the water
Seems the stroking of a dear
Hand upon her.
What is summer in a fine brocaded gown! 40
I should like to see it lying in a heap upon the ground.
All the pink and silver crumpled up on the ground.

I would be the pink and silver as I ran along the paths,
And he would stumble after,
Bewildered by my laughter. 45
I should see the sun flashing from his sword hilt and the buckles on his shoes.
I would choose
To lead him in a maze along the patterned paths,
A bright and laughing maze for my heavy-booted lover,
Till he caught me in the shade, 50
And the buttons of his waistcoat bruised my body as he clasped me,
Aching, melting, unafraid.
With the shadows of the leaves and the sundrops,
And the plopping of the waterdrops,
All about us in the open afternoon— 55
I am very like to swoon
With the weight of this brocade,
For the sun sifts through the shade.

Underneath the fallen blossom
In my bosom, 60
Is a letter I have hid.
It was brought to me this morning by a rider from the Duke.
"Madam, we regret to inform you that Lord Hartwell
Died in action Thursday se'nnight."

As I read it in the white, morning sunlight,
The letters squirmed like snakes. 66
"Any answer, Madam?" said my footman.
"No," I told him.
"See that the messenger takes some refreshment.
No, no answer." 70
And I walked into the garden,
Up and down the patterned paths,
In my stiff, correct brocade.
The blue and yellow flowers stood up proudly in the sun,
Each one. 75
I stood upright, too,
Held rigid to the pattern
By the stiffness of my gown.
Up and down I walked,
Up and down. 80

In a month he would have been my husband.
In a month, here, underneath this lime,
We would have broke the pattern;
He for me, and I for him,
He as Colonel, I as Lady, 85
On this shady seat.
He had a whim
That sunlight carried blessing.
And I answered, "It shall be as you have said."
Now he is dead. 90

In summer and in winter I shall walk
Up and down
The patterned garden paths
In my stiff, brocaded gown.
The squills and daffodils 95
Will give place to pillared roses, and to asters, and to snow.
I shall go
Up and down,
In my gown.
Gorgeously arrayed, 100
Boned and stayed.
And the softness of my body will be guarded from embrace
By each button, hook, and lace.
For the man who should loose me is dead,
Fighting with the Duke in Flanders, 105
In a pattern called a war.
Christ! What are patterns for? (1916)

NUMBER 3 ON THE DOCKET

Note

In "Number 3 on the Docket" Miss Lowell used the dramatic monologue for an autobiographical narrative, which is related in a critical moment. The murderess confesses her guilt to her lawyer and explains the deed as caused by her lonely home life. The narrative element gives way to the dramatic, until at the end of the poem we break into the realm of the drama with a stage direction.

The lawyer, are you?
Well! I ain't got nothin' to say.
Nothin'!
I told the perlice I hadn't nothin'.
They know'd real well 'twas me. 5
Ther warn't no supposin',
Ketchin' me in the woods as they did,
An' me in my house dress.
Folks don't walk miles an' miles
In the drifted snow, 10
With no hat nor wrap on 'em
Ef everythin's all right, I guess.
All right? Ha! Ha! Ha!
Nothin' warn't right with me.
Never was. 15
Oh, Lord! Why did I do it?
Why ain't it yesterday, and Ed here agin?
Many's the time I've set up with him nights
When he had cramps, or rheumatism, or somethin'.
I used ter nurse him same's ef he was a baby. 20
I wouldn't hurt him; I love him!
Don't you dare to say I killed him. Twarn't me!
Somethin' got aholt o' me. I couldn't help it.
Oh, what shall I do! What shall I do!
Yes, sir. 25
No, sir.
I beg your pardon, I—I—
Oh, I'm a wicked woman!
An' I'm desolate, desolate!
Why warn't I struck dead or paralyzed 30
Afore my hands done it.
Oh, my God, what shall I do!

Title. **docket**, a calendar or schedule of cases which a court is to try. Compare this poem with "A Warning for All Desperate Women" (page 234).

No, sir, ther ain't no extenuatin' circumstances,
An' I don't want none.
I want a bolt o' lightnin' 35
To strike me dead right now!
Oh, I'll tell yer.
But it won't make no diff'rence.
Nothin' will.
Yes, I killed him. 40
Why do yer make me say it?
It's cruel! Cruel!
I killed him because o' th' silence;
The long, long silence,
That watched all around me, 45
And he wouldn't break it.
I tried to make him,
Time an' agin,
But he was terrible taciturn, Ed was.
He never spoke 'cept when he had to, 50
An' then he'd only say "yes" and "no."
You can't even guess what that silence was.
I'd hear it whisperin' in my ears,
An' I got frightened, 'twas so thick,
An' al'ays comin' back. 55
Ef Ed would ha' talked sometimes
It would ha' driven it away;
But he never would.
He didn't hear it same as I did.
You see, sir, 60
Our farm was off'n the main road,
And set away back under the mountain;
And the village was seven mile off,
Measurin' after you'd got out o' our lane.
We didn't have no hired man, 65
'Cept in hayin' time;
An' Dane's place,
That was the nearest,
Was clear way 'tother side the mountain.
They used Marley post-office 70
An' ours was Benton.
Ther was a cart-track took yer to Dane's in summer,
An' it warn't above two mile that way,
But it warn't never broke out winters.
I used to dread the winters. 75
Seem's ef I couldn't abear to see the goldenrod bloomin';
Winter'd come so quick after that.
You don't know what snow's like when yer with it
Day in an' day out.
Ed would be out all day loggin', 80
An' I set at home and look at the snow
Layin' over everythin';
It 'ud dazzle me blind,
Till it warn't white any more, but black as ink.
Then the quiet 'ud commence rushin' past my ears 85
Till I most went mad listenin' to it.
Many's the time I've dropped a pan on the floor
Jest to hear it clatter.
I was most frantic when dinner-time come
An' Ed was back from the woods. 90
I'd ha' give my soul to hear him speak.
But he'd never say a word till I asked him
Did he like the raised biscuits or whatever,
An' then sometimes he'd jest nod his answer.
Then he'd go out agin, 95
An' I'd watch him from the kitchin winder.
It seemed the woods come marchin' out to meet him
An' the trees 'ud press round him an' hustle him.
I got so I was scared o' th' trees.
I thought they come nearer, 100
Every day a little nearer,
Closin' up round the house.
I never went in t' th' woods winters,
Though in summer I liked 'em well enough.
It warn't so bad when my little boy was with us. 105
He used to go sleddin' and skatin',
An' every day his father fetched him to school in the pung
An' brought him back agin.
We scraped an' scraped fer Neddy;
We wanted him to have a education. 110
We sent him to high school,
An' he went up to Boston to Technology.
He was a minin' engineer,
An' doin real well,
A credit to his bringin' up. 115

107. **pung**, a box sleigh.

But his very first position ther was an explosion in the mine.
And I'm glad! I'm glad!
He ain't here to see me now.
Neddy! Neddy!
I'm your mother still, Neddy. 120
Don't turn from me like that.
I can't abear it. I can't! I can't!
What did you say?
Oh, yes, sir.
I'm here. 125
I'm very sorry,
I don't know what I'm sayin'.
No, sir,
Not till after Neddy died.
'Twas the next winter the silence come; 130
I don't remember noticin' it afore.
That was five year ago,
An' it's been gittin' worse an' worse.
I asked Ed to put in a telephone.
I thought ef I felt the whisperin' comin' on 135
I could ring up some o' th' folks.
But Ed wouldn't hear of it.
He said we'd paid so much for Neddy
We couldn't hardly git along as 'twas.
An' he never understood me wantin' to talk. 140
Well, this year was worse'n all the others;
We had a terrible spell o' stormy weather,
An' the snow lay so thick
You couldn't see the fences even.
Out o' doors was as flat as the palm o' my hand. 145
Ther warn't a hump or a holler
Fer as you could see.
It was so quiet
The snappin' o' the branches back in the wood-lot
Sounded like pistol shots. 150
Ed was out all day
Same as usual.
An' it seemed he talked less'n ever.
He didn't even say "Good-mornin'," once or twice,
An' jest nodded or shook his head when I asked him things. 155
On Monday he said he'd got to go over to Benton
Fer some oats.
I'd oughter ha' gone with him,
But 'twas washin'-day
An' I was afeared the fine weather'd break, 160
An' I couldn't do my dryin'.
All my life I'd done my work punctual,
An' I couldn't fix my conscience
To go junketin' on a washin'-day.
I can't tell you what that day was to me. 165
It dragged an' dragged,
Fer ther warn't no Ed ter break it in the middle
Fer dinner.
Every time I stopped stirrin' the water
I heerd the whisperin' all about me. 170
I stopped oftener'n I should
To see ef 'twas still ther,
An' it al'ays was.
An' gittin' louder
It seemed ter me. 175
Once I threw up the winder to feel the wind.
That seemed most alive somehow.
But the woods looked so kind of menacin'
I closed it quick
An' started to mangle's har's I could.
The squeakin' was comfortin'. 181
Well, Ed come home 'bout four.
I seen him down the road,
An' I run out through the shed inter th' barn
To meet him quicker. 185
I hollered out, 'Hullo!'
But he didn't say nothin';
He jest drove right in
An' climbed out o' th' sleigh
An' commenced unharnessin'. 190
I asked him a heap o' questions;
Who he'd seed
An' what he'd done.
Once in a while he'd nod or shake,
But most o' th' time he didn't do nothin'.
'Twas gittin' dark then, 196
An' I was in a state,
With the loneliness
An' Ed payin' no attention
Like somethin' warn't livin'. 200
All of a sudden it come,
I don't know what,
But I jest couldn't stand no more.
It didn't seem's though that was Ed,
An' it didn't seem as though I was me. 205

I had to break a way out somehow;
Somethin' was closin' in
An' I was stiflin'.
Ed's loggin' ax was ther,
An' I took it. 210
Oh, my God!
I can't see nothin' else afore me all the time.
I run out inter th' woods,
Seemed as ef they was pullin' me;
An' all the time I was wadin' through the snow 215
I seed Ed in front of me
Where I'd laid him.
An' I see him now.
There! There!
What you holdin' me fer? 220
I want ter go to Ed,
He's bleedin'.
Stop holdin' me.
I got to go.
I'm comin', Ed. 225
I'll be ther in a minit.
Oh, I'm so tired!
(*Faints.*)

(1919)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Modern Narrative Poetry

A very comprehensive criticism of modern narrative poetry will be found in the last two chapters of W. MacNeil Dixon's *English Epic and Heroic Poetry*. Dutton, New York, 1912. Unfortunately he does not treat contemporary narrative poetry.

List of Modern Narrative Poems

Note. Collections of modern narrative poetry are rare; in fact none shows the development and diversification of the form. The most satisfactory collection is that of Mr. G. E. Teter entitled *One Hundred Narrative Poems*, published in the Lake English Classics Series, Scott Foresman and Company, 1918.

A. English Narrative Poetry

Among the better known English narratives of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, *The Lady of the Lake*, and *Marmion*, by Scott; *The Ancient Mariner*, and *Christabel*, by Coleridge; *Laodamia* and *Lucy Gray*, by Wordsworth; *Childe Harold* and *Don Juan*, by Byron; *Endymion*, by Keats; *The Revolt of Islam*, by Shelley; *Enoch Arden* and *Idylls of the King*, by Tennyson; *The Life and Death of Jason*, *Sigurd the Volsung*, *The Fall of the Nibelungs*, and *The Earthly Paradise*, by Morris; *Sohrab and Rustum*, by Arnold; *Dramatic Romances*, *Men and Women*, by Browning; *Aurora Leigh*, by Mrs. Browning; *Tristram in Lyonesse*, by Swinburne; *Barrack-Room Ballads*, by Kipling; *The Highwayman* and *The Tales of the Mermaid Tavern*, by Noyes; *Marpessa*, by Stephen Phillips; and *The Widow in the Bye Street*, *Dauber*, and *The Daffodil Fields*, by Masefield.

B. American Narrative Poetry

Among the better known American narratives of the same period are: *Snow-bound*, by Whittier; *The Vision of Sir Launfal*, by Lowell; *The One-Hoss Shay*, by Holmes; *The Tales of a Wayside Inn*, by Longfellow; the western narratives of Bret Harte; the narratives of Robert Frost contained in *North of Boston* and *New Hampshire*; *Men, Women, and Ghosts*, *Can Grande's Castle*, and *Legends*, by Amy Lowell; *Spoon River Anthology*, by Masters; and such poems of E. A. Robinson as *Avon's Harvest* and *Roman Bartholow*.

CHAPTER V

LYRIC POETRY

AN INTRODUCTION

I. What Is Lyric Poetry?

The distinguishing characteristic of narrative poetry—whether epic, romance, ballad, or modern tale in verse—is its story; if it does not, like a story, unfold a succession of events, it is not narrative poetry.

Narrative poetry has the power of arousing emotion in those who read it or hear it read, but their feelings of love, fear, and hate, their admiration of the heroic, their breathless excitement and anxiety over the outcome, and their amusement at the absurd or ludicrous, arise directly from the story itself and only indirectly from any emotions which the author of the tale may have felt while creating it. The minstrel or story-teller may arouse the feelings of his audience with his voice or harp; but the more absorbed the listeners are in the story, the less they think of its creator. Poems that are purely narrative are, in other words, essentially objective; that is, they often exist almost independent of the mind and emotions of the author, who need not be thought of in connection with them.

In contrast with such objective poems, there are others which do not depend for their effectiveness upon narrative, for they tell no story. Such poems are the metrical embodiments of the author's thoughts and feelings, and become the direct and immediate channel of his communication with his reader. They are subjective; that is, they pertain to their creator and are the direct expression of his reflections and emotions. Poems of this type naturally cover a very wide range of thinking and feeling. The term ordinarily but loosely applied to the type is lyric. Lyric meant originally suitable for singing to the accompaniment of the lyre, but, as we shall see, the word is now applied to many reflective and philosophical poems as well as to those which are purely emotional. Some conception of this range in content, mood, form, and emphasis, as well as some idea of the historical development of the type in English literature, will appear in the following paragraphs. It must be understood, of course, that in so complex a type the classification is not easy. There will be much overlapping of divisions, and the classification itself will not be complete. The discussion may serve, however, to give some idea of the range and content of the lyric.

Because lyric poetry is subjective, it is usually thought of as being invariably emotional. Much of it is, to be sure, the expression of the poet's feelings; but much, also, is the expression of his thoughts. The whole sweep of this type may be said to extend, in fact, from the philosophical, reflective, interpretative, and didactic, on the one hand—the poetry of thought—to the highly personal and emotional on the other hand—the poetry of feeling. From the first we get light; from the second, heat. It would be going much too far to suggest that a reflective poem never contains an expression of feeling, or that an emotional poem is always devoid of philosophical teaching; nevertheless, these general divisions of thought and feeling do exist in lyrical poetry. Poetry of thought may be defined as the essay mood in poetry; in it the poet is as emotionally detached from his product as he ever is in this form of literature. Among the subjects which appear in the poetry of thought are morality, social relationships, and the strength and weaknesses of human beings. These subdivisions will be clearer in illustration.

Wordsworth has defined "all good poetry" as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings." And yet much of Wordsworth's poetry and that of many other poets shows more thought than feeling and is sometimes characterized, indeed, by a cool and placid absence of emotion. Poems on the meaning

of life and on contentment, happiness, independence, duty, and other moral virtues appear in this group. Examples are Surrey's "The Means to Attain a Happy Life," Greene's "Sweet Content," Wotton's "The Character of a Happy Life," Wordsworth's "The Happy Warrior" and the "Ode to Duty," and Clough's "Say Not the Struggle Naught Availeth." Browning's "Rabbi Ben Ezra" is a treatise on old age, a Ciceronian *De Senectute* in verse; Shelley's "Ozymandias" is a comment on the vanity of human ambition. And so with many other poems which are essentially moral and didactic, and in which the poet appears as a lay preacher rather than as a man of feeling.

Social criticism, too, is the basis of many of these reflective poems. Here, however, hot indignation at "man's inhumanity to man" frequently gives the poem a glow which the purely philosophical poems do not possess. Burns's "A Man's a Man for A' That" is a plea for social equality; Hood's poignant "Song of the Shirt" inveighs against sweat-shop slavery; Kipling's "The White Man's Burden" argues for Anglo-Saxon responsibility in the world; Whitman's poems and those of Carl Sandburg are filled with social comment and criticism.

E. A. Robinson's work provides examples of another division of reflective poetry, that in which the author's concern is with the numerous motives of human actions. Here, too, the poet is much more concerned with his material than he is with himself. In this subdivision most of the poetry is modern, since chiefly in democratic times have lyric poets revealed an interest, not in their own souls, but in the souls of others. In his social satires Burns provides the best early examples of the type. Such a poem as "Holy Willie's Prayer" shows the keenest possible power of penetration into the characters of men; sham, pretense, and all the masks of life are stripped away, and a human soul lies naked and quivering before us. This poem and many others like it which are based on events lie in the border-land between lyric and narrative poetry and may be classified in either division. In this volume they appear among the lyric poems in the present chapter, although their inclusion in Chapter IV could also be defended.

These few illustrations will serve to show that not all lyric poetry is filled with the emotions of the poet. Some is highly reflective; some almost completely objective. But most lyric poetry is charged with emotion and stamped with the feelings of the poet; love, grief, religious and patriotic passion, love of nature, of art, of the past world or the realms of fancy, all provide him with subjects and moods to be poured into the mold of the lyric poem.

II. The Themes and Moods of Lyric Poetry

Love, and especially romantic love, is one of the most frequent of lyric moods. It may appear in various aspects—enjoyment of love in youth, love pain or longing, sorrow over the unfaithfulness or loss of the beloved, praise or repudiation of the beloved, invitation to marry, and conjugal happiness. The burning love poems of the Lesbian Sappho, who died centuries before the beginning of the Christian era, are proof, if any is needed, that women may express the love mood in verse. And yet in English literature there were no women poets of any merit until the beginning of the nineteenth century. Then we have a great sequence of love poems in Mrs. Browning's *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, addressed to her husband, and many love poems by other modern women. Most love poetry, however, is either expressed in the third person, or presents a man's passionate regard for a woman. Some of these addresses are entirely conventional, suggesting nothing more than a polite compliment; such are most of the love sonnets of the artificial Elizabethans. Others flame with glowing passion; such is, for example, Burns's "A Red, Red Rose," in which the poet begins with praise of his mistress and, as though unable to restrain himself, bursts into a direct and impassioned address to her. Love poems are so familiar a subtype of the lyric as hardly to need illustration; a few examples will suffice. Poems which have love as the basic mood are Marlowe's "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love," Shakespeare's "O Mistress Mine" and "Take, O Take Those Lips Away," Suckling's "Why So Pale and Wan, Fond Lover?" Carey's "Sally in Our Alley," Burns's "Highland

Mary" and "To Mary in Heaven," Landor's "Rose Aylmer," and countless other metrical expressions of the way of a man with a maid in palace or cottage.

Love is the mood of life and youth and spring. It is perhaps less profoundly moving, however, than the mood of death, the thought of which thicks men's blood with chill anticipation or thrusts them into the black depths of sorrow. In his *Philosophy of Composition* Poe declares that "melancholy is . . . the most legitimate of all the poetical tones," and later in the same essay that "the death . . . of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world." Poe certainly followed his own theory, for the prevailing situation in his poems and short stories is the death of a beautiful young woman and the grief of her lover. For old men and women to pass in the fullness of their years back into the mists of eternity from which they have come may seem fitting enough; indeed, there is an element of melancholy in the sight of aged folks lingering like withered apples on a bough, belated beyond their span. But when youth and beauty are thrust into the damp earth in the springtime of their life, the contrast is sharp, depressing, and therefore deeply emotional and poetic. Many poets besides Poe have found the truth of this contrast; witness Sir John Beaumont's "Of His Dear Son, Gervase," Rossetti's "My Sister's Sleep," and Bryant's "The Death of the Flowers." Similar poems in which the sorrow is sharp, but not especially enhanced by the contrast of death and youthful beauty, are Milton's "On His Deceased Wife," Cowper's "On the Receipt of My Mother's Picture," and Eugene Field's "Little Boy Blue," in which a child is lost forever from the world.

In the poems just listed the grief is personal and sharp. Many poems of death, however, are commemorative rather than poignant in tone; in others, as in Tennyson's "In Memoriam" and Arnold's "Rugby Chapel," the two moods mingle. Commemorative and obituary poems, in which the poet has no thought of his own relationship to death, are called elegiac. Of these some are very general, like Gray's famous "Elegy in a Country Churchyard" and other productions of the "graveyard school." Others contain the note of lament or of the requiem; such are Scott's "Soldier, Rest! Thy Warfare O'er" and Burns's "Lament for Culloden." Many are memorial poems, tributes to the departed in which the sense of personal loss is either lacking altogether or overcast by reflection. To this class belong tributes to national heroes, like Wolfe's "The Burial of Sir John Moore at Corunna"; Tennyson's "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington," written by England's official bard to commemorate the passing of an heroic figure; Milton's "Lycidas," in honor of a college friend; and Shelley's "Adonais," dedicated to the memory of John Keats.

It is natural that lyric poets, even more than other men, should give expression to reflections on their old age and death. Hence a great number of lyric poems show a concern—not often an anxiety—over the last phases of a poet's life, his death, and what lies beyond. Such poems are: Landor's "On His Seventy-fifth Birthday"; Arnold's "Growing Old"; Keats's sonnets, "When I Have Fears That I May Cease to Be" and "Bright Star, Would I Were Steadfast As Thou Art"; Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar," with its note of resignation and faith; Browning's "Prospice"; Henley's "Invictus," robust and brave in tone; Stevenson's fine "Requiem"; and Seeger's "I Have a Rendezvous with Death," one of a great many death-poems by soldier poets.

The theme of death suggests another subject and mood of frequent occurrence in lyric poetry—religious feeling. All hymns are, of course, religious poems, although not all are great lyrics. But not all religious poems are hymns; many that have no connection with organized religion embody prolonged reflections on religious subjects, as do Raleigh's conception of heaven expressed in "His Pilgrimage," and Herbert's poem of submission to divine will, "The Collar," a poem which has the same general theme as Thompson's more vivid "The Hound of Heaven." Among hymns which are still sung, and which are worthy of inclusion in any collection of religious lyrics are Addison's "Divine Ode," which Thackeray praised so highly; Watts's "O God, Our Help in Ages Past"; Cowper's "God Moves in a Mysterious Way"; and Charles Wes-

ley's "Jesus, Lover of My Soul." All of these poets were moved profoundly by a deeply religious feeling; they and other famous hymn-writers were stirred by the same spirit which came to the prophet Isaiah when the burning coals from the altar touched his lips.

Love of country, too, is a frequent theme of poets, and is often as movingly expressed as is religious emotion. Thus Emerson's "Concord Hymn" is hymnal in spirit, though the shrine of the patriot's devotion is his native land. Thomson in "Rule, Britannia" and Henley in "England, My England" were moved by similar devotion to the land of their birth. Longfellow's "The Ship of State" and Scott's "Breathes There the Man with Soul So Dead" are general expressions of love of country. Finally, lyrics in which the ruler or the national flag is addressed or praised often find their way into the body of patriotic literature, the king or the banner becoming the symbol of all that the country means to those who love it.

During some periods of English literature, notably the age of Queen Anne, nature did not appear extensively as a subject in lyric poetry; in other periods, and especially during the so-called Romantic Movement at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, it exerted a powerful influence. Nature in English and American poetry is so broad a topic that it has been treated in several whole volumes; here it will be possible only to suggest some phases of the subject. Poets frequently deal with the grander aspects of nature—the storms, the winds, the sea, and the mountains. Shelley, for example, has written an ode "To a Cloud" and another "To the West Wind," and Lanier has a "Song of the Chattahoochee," in which he describes the mountains and waterfalls. Wordsworth's poems are filled with descriptions of mountains, valleys, and glens. Poetic descriptions of water might be made the subject of a long study. The poetry of any maritime people is naturally marked by the influence of the sea. This is especially true of English poetry; from numerous possible examples Masefield's "Sea-fever" stands out as an expression of the enchantment which the salt air has for the Englishman, and Campbell's "Ye Mariners of England" as an illustration of the combination of the heroic and the love of the sea. One is tempted to digress into epic, novel, and short story to show the wide extent of this influence; it will be enough to say, however, that lyric poetry has a full share of it. Water is further treated in Wordsworth's descriptions of his beloved lakes and mountain tarns, in Tennyson's "The Brook," and in Yeats's "The Lake Isle of Innisfree."

Nature appears further in those poems which deal with beasts, birds, and flowers. The skylark, spurning the earth and soaring as he sings, has become the subject of poems by Wordsworth, Shelley, and Meredith; the American poets Hayne and Lanier have glorified the mocking-bird; Burns and Bryant have both written odes to the water-fowl. Burns has addressed a poem to a mouse, Cowper to a pet hare, Gray to a favorite cat. Blake has made the sunflower the subject of his verse, Wordsworth, the daffodil and the celandine, Bryant, the fringed gentian, Tennyson, a flower "in the crannied wall."

The method of treatment of nature varies almost as widely as do the subjects themselves. Sometimes the poet is detached from the object described or interpreted, becoming, as Wordsworth usually did, "Nature's priest." Sometimes his attitude is pantheistic; that is, he sees in natural phenomena and objects the indwelling spirit of Nature personified, or of God. Often he treats natural objects but as the symbols of human life; thus, in the mouse whose nest he has accidentally destroyed Burns sees himself, and in the mountain-daisy which he has plowed under he beholds not only a flower destroyed but a maiden ruined. So each lyric poet interprets the effect upon him of his contact with nature and employs his poem as a mold of his emotional response to nature's influence.

Art as well as nature is the subject of lyric poetry. Thus we find poets inspired by music, painting, sculpture, and literature. Keats was moved by "the glory that was Greece" into writing his "Ode on a Grecian Urn" and his sonnets "On Seeing the Elgin Marbles" and "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer"; Byron's "Stanzas for Music," and Dryden's "Alexander's Feast" and "A Song for St. Cecilia's Day" have

music as their subject; the stories of the past reappear in Landor's "Past Ruined Ilion Helen Lives," Lowell's "The Shepherd of King Admetus," Tennyson's "Ulysses" and "Œnone," Swinburne's "Hymn to Proserpine," E. A. Robinson's "Cassandra," Sara Teasdale's "Helen of Troy," and numerous other poems in which the creations of earlier bards live again in the work of their literary posterity. So one generation of artists inspires the labors of a succeeding group, and a world of legend and beauty is reinterpreted and kept alive.

Some of the most significant and frequent themes and moods of lyric poetry have been listed and illustrated in the preceding paragraphs. It may be enough, therefore, to conclude what is to be said here about lyric subjects by enumerating briefly a very few more, in order that something of the full range of the lyric may be understood. Longing for the past, for lost childhood, for one's native land, or for the never-never land is a lyric mood which has the fragrance of pensive melancholy. This mood appears in Lamb's "Old Familiar Faces," Hood's "I Remember, I Remember," Moore's "The Harp That Once Through Tara's Halls," Arnold's "The Forsaken Merman," Whittier's "The Barefoot Boy," and Lady Nairne's "The Land o' the Leal." Love of children is still another lyric subject, represented in Greene's "Sephestia's Song to Her Child" and other lullaby songs, and in Blake's "The Lamb" and other poems. The fairy world appears in Shakespeare's song sung by Ariel, "Where the Bee Sucks, There Suck I," and more directly in Allingham's "The Fairies" and scores of other poems dealing with the fairy world. The love of the heroic, the basis of so many narrative poems, crops out in the lyric in such praises of great achievement as Drayton's "The Virginian Voyage," Scott's "March, March, Ettrick and Teviotdale," Miller's "Columbus," and numerous poems on Lincoln. Finally, convivial poems of wine, women, song, and friendship, appear in considerable numbers. These include drinking songs such as Burns's "Willie Brewed a Peck o' Malt"; songs of friendship like "Auld Lang Syne"; and a host of others in which the prevailing tone is *carpe diem*, enjoy the day, give no thought for the morrow, take the cash and let the credit go, and bid dull care go hang.

III. Individual and Communal Elements in Lyric Poetry

The preceding paragraphs have been devoted to the content and mood of lyrical poetry. Before form is taken up, some brief attention must be given to another matter, the comparative individuality of lyric poems. A careful reading of a number will show that a striking difference exists among them. Some are very obviously the expression of the poet's innermost feeling and give the impression that they would have been written even if no reader had existed; others are just as clearly communal and suggest that the poet was but the mouthpiece of a social group. Thus among the religious poems Charles Wesley's "Jesus, Lover of My Soul" is a distinctly individual and personal prayer, and when it is sung, each singer applies the words to himself, whereas Watts's "O God, Our Help in Ages Past" is just as plainly a group petition. Drinking songs and other convivial pieces, to illustrate further, are obviously communal, whereas the anguished lyric cry of a bereaved lover is almost too personal and sacred for profane eyes and lips. So lyric poems may be considered not only from the point of view of content and form, but also from the point of view of the extent to which they pertain to the heart of the poet himself or are but his expression of a group thought or sentiment.

IV. The Forms of Lyric Poetry

This is not the place for a discussion of the relationship of poetry and verse or even for an outline of the old and bitterly waged debate on the question as to whether all poetry must be metrical or not. It must be said, therefore, somewhat dogmatically that the popular conception of a lyric poem is that it is a brief, metrical expression of an elevated thought or emotion. A reflective or philosophical lyric, such as an ode or an elegy, may be long; an emotional lyric must necessarily be short. The reason for this brevity Poe makes clear in his *Philosophy of*

Composition (page II-509), where he says that it is physically impossible for a reader to sustain the intense emotion of a lyric poem beyond a reasonable limit. Rhythm is basic in life and in labor, and a sense for rhythm is inherent in most men. Hence meter, which is based on the regular recurrence of a beat or accent, in accordance with some definite scheme or pattern, is generally thought to be part of the beauty of poetry and to distinguish it from prose, which may be rhythmic but not according to a regular plan. Great poetry as distinguished from mere verse or doggerel is a felicitous harmonizing of lofty thinking, noble sentiment, beauty of language, and melodious measure which pleases the ear while the thought sets the mind aglow and the feeling expressed stirs the heart. Content and form are soul and body; in great poetry neither is trivial nor lacking in power to arouse admiration.

It is not possible here to enumerate all of the metrical molds into which the lyric poet has poured his material, since these are almost as numerous as the subjects themselves. It must be enough, therefore, to define meter and to explain very simply and non-technically how the verse of a given poem may be described.

When a line of poetry is read, it will be noticed that the voice accents instinctively certain of the syllables and leaves certain others unaccented. For example, each of the following lines from Byron's "The Isles of Greece" contains eight syllables:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
The isles of Greece, the isles of Greece
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
Where burning Sappho loved and sung

When these are "scanned," or read for the accent, it will be observed that the beat falls on syllables 2, 4, 6, and 8; that is, there are four accented and four unaccented syllables in each line. In other lines of poetry it will be found that the number, proportion, and relative order of accented and unaccented syllables differ from those in the lines quoted. The length of all lines is described, however, in terms of the number of accented syllables. Thus the accented syllable, together with either one or two unaccented syllables, becomes the unit of line measurement, and is called the metrical foot. In marking verse the accented syllable is usually represented by the acute accent (′) and the unaccented by the cross (x). It is readily apparent that one accented and one or two unaccented syllables may be made into the following combinations: (1) x ′; (2) ′ x; (3) x x ′; (4) ′ x x; (5) x ′ x. These metrical feet are given the Greek names: (1) iamb; (2) trochee; (3) anapest; (4) dactyl; (5) amphibrach. To these may be added the spondee, ′ ′, where the relatively rare combination of two accented syllables into one foot is made. The prevailing feet are the iamb and its inversion the trochee; the anapest, and more rarely its inversion, the dactyl, are occasionally used for variety or for certain verse movements. Sometimes a rest, or blank, takes the place of an unaccented syllable. Thus the first two lines of Tennyson's monody would be marked as below.

x ′ | x ′ | x ′
Break, | break, | break

x x ′ | x ′ | x ′
On thy cold | gray stones, | O sea!

The time given to a correct reading of the three accented syllables in the first line is the same as would be devoted to the reading of six syllables, and the line consists, therefore, of the full time equivalent of three iambs.

In describing the meter of a line of poetry, then, we name the prevailing foot and the number of feet to the line, as, for example, *trimeter* for three feet; *tetrameter* for four; *pentameter* for five; *hexameter* for six. Thus the two lines from Byron quoted above are described as iambic tetrameter. The meter of Longfellow's *Hiawatha* is trochaic tetrameter, and of his *Evangeline*, dactylic hexameter.

In describing the form of a lyric poem there are two other items to consider, the rime and the stanzaic form. Rime consists of correspondence or identity of final sounds with difference of sounds preceding the terminals; thus *boat* and *moat* rime, but *moat* and *mote* do not, because completely identical in sound. Rime is ordinarily employed for words coming at the end of the line and is represented in metrical description by the use of letters to show which lines rime. In the following sonnet of Wordsworth the letters follow the lines:

The world is too much with us; late and soon, (a)
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers. (b)
Little we see in nature that is ours: (b)
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon! (a)
This sea that bares her bosom to the moon; (a)
The winds that will be howling at all hours, (b)
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers; (b)
For this, for everything, we are out of tune: (a)
It moves us not.—Great God! I'd rather be (c)
A pagan suckled in a creed outworn; (d)
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea, (c)
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;(d)
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea; (c)
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathéd horn. (d)

The rime in this poem runs, *abba abba cdcdcd.*

Finally, in describing the meter of a poem we must take into account the pattern made by the line groupings or stanzas. In this paragraph only a few of the most important can be defined. A stanza consisting of four lines is described as a *quatrain;* two iambic pentameter lines riming *aabb*, etc., form an *heroic couplet.* Spenser in his *Faerie Queene* first used the *Spenserian stanza.* This consists of eight iambic pentameter lines riming *abab bcbc* with a final iambic hexameter, called an Alexandrine, riming with the second and fourth lines of the preceding quatrain. The sonnet, brought to England from Italy by Wyatt and Surrey about the middle of the sixteenth century, is a poem consisting of fourteen iambic pentameter lines divided into two linked quatrains, eight lines forming the "octave" and six lines forming the "sestet"; the lines rime *abba abba cde cde* (or *cd cd cd*). Wordsworth's poem, just quoted, is an Italian sonnet in form. The English sonnet, used by Shakespeare and other Elizabethan sonneteers also contains fourteen iambic pentameter lines; its rime scheme, however, is *abab cdcd efef gg*, that is, three quatrains, and a riming couplet at the end.

Thus in describing a poem metrically one must name the prevailing foot, give the number of feet to the line, indicate the rime scheme, and designate the stanzaic form. An absolutely complete description would include also a catalogue of metrical peculiarities and irregularities, but into such details it is not possible to enter here.

The preceding paragraphs have dealt with the traditional verse forms. Certain poems, however, cannot be fitted into any traditional metrical scheme. Among these are poems written in *vers libre*, or free verse. Poetry always tends to follow patterns or to create new ones, but not all patterns need be symmetrical and regular. Any period in the history of literature which is characterized by a strong movement toward freedom and variety may create verse which is unsymmetrical and irregular. In such free verse the patterns have their bases in cadences and recurring images and symbols. Free verse is not prose straining at poetry; it is poetry itself if the rhythm springs from the sincere emotion of the poet expressed in rhapsodical cadences and images. The development of this "new" poetry, as it is sometimes called, began in America with Whitman, and appears notably in the work of Amy Lowell, E. L. Masters, John Gould Fletcher, and Carl Sandburg. In England the free verse movement is less advanced.*

V. The Trend of Lyric Poetry

The history of lyric poetry in England shows a constant battle between standardization and revolt. The desire of poets to conform to the established in subject and verse creates a period characterized by convention. Then come the revolutionists, eager for new themes, new theories, and new verse forms, and create a period of revolt. The revolutionists of one age seem old-fashioned to their literary successors and are rebelled against in their turn; thus, poetry develops, so to speak, in waves of alternate convention and revolt. To these movements must be added numerous cross-currents of native and foreign influences, so that whereas some periods in which creative genius seems to be particularly stimulated abound in lyric poetry, others which lack the stimulation are barren and arid. How these forces operate will appear in the following brief sketch of the development of the lyric in England.

In the period before the beginning of the Renaissance, about 1500, lyrical poetry is represented by a comparatively thin list of poems dealing mainly with religious subjects, love, and nature. The first significant out-

*For a fuller exposition of free verse consult Marguerite Wilkinson's *New Voices* (The Macmillan Company, 1919).

pouring of lyrics came in the sixteenth century, when the Reformation, the rebirth of learning, and national expansion through commerce and exploration, stimulated the imagination of the English people mightily. Under the Tudor monarchs the writing of lyrics became an elegant pastime. It was an artificial age characterized by a thirst for novelty, which was unchecked by any instinct toward conformity. The Italian influence predominated; thus blank verse and sonnet were borrowed from Italy together with many other forms and practices in art. The period was rich in lyric poetry of every conceivable theme and form. Every courtier tried his hand at sonnet or madrigal, and the dramas were crammed with popular songs, Shakespeare's plays alone containing more than three score.

The Cavalier and Puritan period, which stretches across the second and third quarters of the seventeenth century, is marked by two influences. From Ben Jonson the poets of the Commonwealth inherited a taste for the classical and particularly for the Horatian; from John Donne some of them caught an interest in the metaphysical. Jonson's influence shows itself in the work of such poets as Herrick, Donne's in the religious poetry of the so-called metaphysical school.

At the end of the century, after the restoration of Charles II, came a period of satirical writing in which poets impaled their enemies on the smooth shafts of epigrammatic pentameters. Pope, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, inherited this love of satire. The age of Pope is called the neo-classical, or pseudo-classical, period, because the poets, while pretending to imitate the Greek and Roman classical writers, caught more of the form than of the spirit of their great models. The age was highly artificial, subscribing quite readily to Pope's dictum that "the proper study of mankind is man," and adopting society as the principal theme of its lyric poetry. But just as the poetry of the age of Dryden and of Pope represents a revolt against the freer and more varied forms of the Elizabethan period, so the neo-classical period suffered a similar rebellion when the Romantic Movement of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries brought in the themes of nature and medieval legend and revived a general interest in the sonnet and a desire to experiment with newer verse forms.

The influence of Wordsworth and Coleridge and their successors, Shelley and Keats, appears in the work of the Victorians, Tennyson, Morris, Arnold, and others. In the Victorian period lyric poetry embodies also, to an unusual extent, the current interest in problems of human society and in the individual souls of men and women. In the twentieth century, especially during and since the World War, lyric poetry has become widely varied in both content and form, and shows at present an impatience with any bolts and shackles which would confine it to set shapes and subjects. This revolt has resulted specifically in the development of free verse as a vehicle for lyric expression.

Less need be said of the history of American poetry. In the colonial period and during the first half of the nineteenth century, lyric poetry in America was sometimes frankly, sometimes covertly, imitative. Whitman is usually thought of as the first distinctly American lyric poet. Since his death there has gradually developed more of a national spirit, so that at present many of the new American voices in song are clearly detached from the English influence which checked the independent development of American poetry in its early years.

CHAPTER V. SELECTIONS

ENGLISH LYRIC POETRY

FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH CENTURIES

NOTE

The Middle English lyric shows at first the strong influence of Latin and French verse forms and subjects, but the native element begins to assert itself in the fourteenth century. Yet even in the earliest lyrics one finds traces of English thought rather than completely servile translation. Our first selection, "Alisoun," for example, although it has many characteristics of contemporary French love songs, has a carefree attitude in thought and meter which is typical of English folk songs rather than French. "Ubi Sunt Qui Ante Nos Fuerunt?" combines Latin moralizing with the Anglo-Saxon tradition of wonder and lament at the mysterious loss of youth and beauty as we found in the laments in Part IV of *Beowulf* (pages 40-42). "The Nutbrowne Maide" (page 344) adopts the medieval debate form of poetry for the purpose of a charming love dialogue, the atmosphere of which is completely English. Finally "Fredome" (page 348), taken from *The Bruce* of John Barbour, a long narrative poem, is one of the earliest recorded lyric expressions of the Anglo-Saxon and Celtic idealization of the life of the free man. These four poems contain the genesis of many of the dominant ideas in English and American lyric poetry: the mystery of life which leads to foreboding and lament, but which also arouses the determination to fight out one's destiny; patriotism and the ideals of the happy warrior; love and social conviviality; songs of nature; and, finally, general reflections upon life.

ANONYMOUS

ALISOUN

Bytuene Mershe ant Averil
  When spray biginneth to springe,
The lutel foul hath hire wyl
  On hyre lud to synge.
Ich libbe in love-longinge 5
For semlokest of alle thynge;
He may me blisse bringe—
  Icham in hire bandoun.
An hendy hap ichabbe y-hent,
Ichot from hevene it is me sent, 10
From alle wymmen my love is lent
  Ant lyht on Alisoun.

On heu hire her is fayr ynoh,
  Hire browe broune, hire eye blake;
With lossum chere he on me loh; 15
  With middel smal ant wel y-make;
Bote he me wolle to hire take
For to buen hire owen make,
Long to lyven ichulle forsake
  Ant feye fallen adoun. 20
An hendy hap ichabbe y-hent, etc.

Nihtes when I wende and wake,
  For-thi myn wonges waxeth won;
Levedi, al for thine sake
  Longinge is y-lent me on. 25
In world his non so wyter mon
That al hire bounté telle con;
Hire swyre is whittore than the swon,
  Ant feyrest may in toune.
An hendy hap ichabbe y-hent, etc. 30

Icham for wowyng al for-wake,
  Wery so water in wore;
Lest eny reve me my make
  Ichabbe y-yerned yore.
  Betere is tholien whyle sore 35
  Then mournen evermore.
    Geynest under gore,
    Herkne to my roun—
An hendy hap ichabbe y-hent, etc.

(c. 1300)

2. **spray**, branch, shoot. 4. **On hyre lud**, in her manner. 5. **libbe**, live. 6. **semlokest**, loveliest. 7. **He**, she (Old English). 8. **Icham**, etc., "I am in her thrall." 9. **An hendy hap**, etc., "a lucky chance I have seized." 10. **Ichot**, I believe. 11. **lent**, turned away. 12. **lyht**, alighted. 13. **heu**, color. **hire her**, her hair. 15. **lossum chere**, lovely face. **loh**, laughed. 17. **Bote**, unless. 18. **buen**, be. **make**, mate. 19. **Long**, etc., "I shall give up living long." 20. **feye**, doomed. 22. **wende**, turn. 23. **For-thi**, etc., "therefore my cheeks grow pale." 24. **Levedi**, lady. 25. **Longinge**, etc., "longing is come upon me." 26. **non so wyter mon**, "no man so wise." 27. **con**, can. 28. **Hire swyre**, etc., "her neck is whiter than the swan." 29. **Ant feyrest**, etc., "and she's the fairest maid in town." 31. **wowyng**, wooing. **for-wake**, exhausted with watching. 32. **so**, as. **wore**, pool. 33. **reve**, deprive. 34. **y-yerned yore**, worried long. 35. **Betere is**, etc., "it is better to suffer bitterly for a while." 37. **Geynest**, etc., "fairest in women's dress." 38. **roun**, love-song.

UBI SUNT QUI ANTE NOS FUERUNT?

Were beth they that biforen us weren,
Houndes ladden and havekes beren,
And hadden feld and wode?
The riche levedies in here bour,
That wereden gold in here tressour, 5
With here brighte rode;

Eten and drounken, and maden hem glad;
Here lif was al with gamen y-lad,
Men kneleden hem biforen;
They beren hem wel swithe heye; 10
And in a twincling of an eye
Here soules weren forloren.

Were is that lawhing and that song,
That trayling and that proude gong,
Tho havekes and tho houndes? 15
Al that joye is went away,
That wele is comen to weylaway
To manye harde stoundes.

Here paradis they nomen here,
And nou they lyen in helle y-fere; 20
The fyr hit brennes evere.
Long is ay, and long is o,
Long is wy, and long is wo;
Thennes ne cometh they nevere.

(c. 1350)

Ubi Sunt Qui Ante Nos Fuerunt? The title means, "Where are those who were before us?" Cf. Vaughan, "Departed Friends" (page 406), Shirley, "Death the Leveler" (page 380), Lamb, "The Old Familiar Faces" (page 471), and Housman, *Last Poems* (page 618). 1. **Were beth**, where are. 2. **ladden**, led. **havekes beren**, carried hawks. 4. **levedies**, ladies. **here**, their. 5. **wereden**, wore. **tressour**, headdress. 6. **rode**, complexion. 8. **with gamen y-lad**, led (lived) with joy. 9. **hem**, them. 10. **swithe heye**, very high. 12. **forloren**, lost. 13. **lawhing**, laughing. 14. **trayling**, wearing trains; hence, majestic, noble. **gong**, gait. 15. **Tho**, those. 17 **That wele**, etc., "that joy has become grief." 18. **To manye**, etc., "and to many hard hours." 19. **Here**, there. **nomen**, took. 20. **y-fere**, together. 21. **brennes**, burns. 23. **wy**, strife.

The Nutbrowne Maide. The "débat" was a medieval dialogue form of poetry, wherein two people debate a question. Here it is the faithfulness of a girl to her lover.

THE NUTBROWNE MAIDE

Be it right or wrong, these men among on women do complaine,
Affermyng this, how that it is a labor spent in vaine
To love them wele, for never a dele they love a man agayne;
For lete a man do what he can ther favor to attayne,
Yet yf a newe to them pursue, ther furst trew lover than 5
Laboreth for nought, and from her thought he is a bannisshed man.

I say not nay but that all day it is bothe writ and sayde
That woman's fayth is, as who saythe, all utterly decayed;
But nevertheless right good witnes in this case might be layde
That they love trewe and contynew—recorde the Nutbrowne Maide, 10
Whiche from her love, whan, her to prove, he cam to make his mone,
Wolde not departe, for in her herte she lovyd but hym allone.

Than betwene us lete us discusse what was all the maner
Betwene them too, we wyl also telle all the peyne and fere
That she was in. Now I begynne, see that ye me answere. 15
Wherfore alle ye that present be, I pray you geve an eare.
I am a knyght, I cum be nyght, as secret as I can,
Sayng, "Alas! thus stondyth the case; I am a bannisshed man."

And I your wylle for to fulfylle, in this wyl not refuse,
Trusting to shewe in wordis fewe that men have an ille use, 20
To ther owne shame wymen to blame, and causeles them accuse.
Therfore to you I answere now, alle wymen to excuse:
"Myn owne hert dere, with you what chiere? I prey you telle anoon;
For in my mynde of all mankynde I love but you allon."

"It stondith so, a dede is do whereof moche harme shal growe. 25
My desteny is for to dey a shamful dethe, I trowe,
Or ellis to flee; the ton must bee, none other wey I knowe

8. as who saythe, as people say. 20. **use**, custom. 27. **ton**, one.

But to withdrawe as an outlaw and take
me to my bowe.
Wherfore adew, my owne hert trewe,
none other red I can;
For I muste to the grene wode goo,
alone, a bannysshed man." 30

"O Lorde, what is this worldis blisse,
that chaungeth as the mone?
My somers day in lusty May is derked
before the none.
I here you saye 'farwel'; nay, nay, we
departe not soo sone.
Why say ye so? wheder wyl ye goo?
alas! what have ye done?
Alle my welfare to sorow and care
shulde chaunge if ye were gon; 35
For in my mynde of all mankynde I love
but you alone."

"I can beleve it shal you greve, and
somwhat you distrayne;
But aftyrwarde your paynes harde within
a day or tweyne
Shal sone aslake, and ye shal take confort
to you agayne.
Why shuld ye nought? for to take
thought, your labur were in vayne.
And thus I do, and pray you, too, as
hertely as I can; 41
For I muste too the grene wode goo,
alone, a bannysshed man."

"Now syth that ye have shewed to me
the secret of your mynde,
I shalbe playne to you agayne, lyke as
ye shal me fynde;
Syth it is so that ye wyll goo, I wol not
leve behynde; 45
Shal never be sayd the Nutbrowne Mayd
was to her love unkind.
Make you redy, for soo am I, all though
it were anoon;
For in my mynde of all mankynde I love
but you alone."

"Yet I you rede to take good hede, what
men wyl thinke and sey;
Of yonge and olde it shalbe tolde that
ye be gone away, 50
Your wanton wylle for to fulfylle, in
grene wood you to play,

29. **red I can**, plan do I know. 33. **departe**, part. 37. **distrayne**, distress. 43. **syth**, since. 45. **leve**, stay. 49. **rede**, advise.

And that ye myght from your delyte noo
lenger make delay.
Rather than ye shuld thus for me be
called an ylle woman,
Yet wolde I to the grenewodde goo
alone, a bannysshed man."

"Though it be songe of olde and yonge
that I shuld be to blame, 55
Theirs be the charge that speke so large
in hurting of my name;
For I wyl prove that feythful love it is
devoyd of shame,
In your distresse and hevynesse to parte
wyth you the same;
And sure all thoo that doo not so, trewe
lovers ar they noon;
But in my mynde of all mankynde I love
but you alone." 60

"I councel yow, remembre how it is noo
maydens lawe
Nothing to dought, but to renne out to
wod with an outlawe;
For ye must there in your hands bere a
bowe redy to drawe,
And as a theef thus must ye lyve ever in
drede and awe,
By whiche to yow gret harme myght
grow; yet had I lever than 65
That I had too the grenewod goo, alone,
a bannysshyd man."

"I thinke not nay, but as ye saye, it is
noo maydens lore;
But love may make me for your sake,
as ye have said before,
To com on fote, to hunte and shote to
gete us mete and store;
For soo that I your company may have,
I aske noo more; 70
From whiche to parte, it makith myn
herte as colde as ony ston;
For in my mynde of all mankynde I love
but you alone."

"For an outlawe this is the lawe, that
men hym take and binde,
Wythout pytee hangéd to bee, and
waver wyth the wynde.

56. **charge**, responsibility. **large**, freely. 58. **parte**, share. 59. **thoo**, these. 61. **noo**, no. 62. **Nothing to dought**, not at all to hesitate. 65. **lever than**, rather then.

Yf I had neede, as God forbede, what rescous coude ye finde? 75
For sothe I trowe, you and your bowe shul drawe for fere behynde;
And noo merveyle, for lytel avayle were in your councel than;
Wherfore I too the wode wyl goo, alone, a bannysshd man."

"Ful wel knowe ye that wymen bee ful febyl for to fyght;
Noo womanhed is it indeede to bee bolde as a knight; 80
Yet in suche fere yf that ye were, amonge enemys day and nyght,
I wolde wythstonde, with bowe in hande, to greve them as I myght,
And you to save, as wymen have from deth many one;
For in my mynde of all mankynde I love but you alone."

"Yet take good hede, for ever I drede that ye coude not sustein 85
The thorney wayes, the depe valeis, the snowe, the frost, the reyn,
The colde, the hete; for, drye or wete, we must lodge on the playn,
And, us above, noon other rove but a brake, bussh, or twayne;
Whiche sone shulde greve you, I beleve, and ye wolde gladly than
That I had too the grenewode goo, alone, a banysshed man." 90

"Syth I have here ben partynere with you of joy and blysse,
I muste also parte of your woo endure, as reason is;
Yet am I sure of oo plesure, and shortly it is this,
That where ye bee, me semeth, perde, I coude not fare amysse.
Wythout more speche, I you beseche that we were soon agone; 95
For in my mynde of all mankynde I love but you alone."

"Yef ye goo thedyr, ye must consider, whan ye have lust to dyne,
Ther shal no mete be fore to gete, nor drinke, bere, ale, ne wine,
Ne shetis clene to lye betwene, made of thred and twyne,
Noon other house but levys and bowes, to kever your hed and myn. 100
Loo! myn herte swete, this ylle dyet shuld make you pale and wan;
Wherfore I to the wood wyl goo, alone, a banysshid man."

"Amonge the wylde dere suche an archier as men say that ye bee
Ne may not fayle of good vitayle, where is so grete plente;
And watir cleere of the ryvere shalbe ful swete to me, 105
Wyth whiche in hele I shal right wele endure, as ye shal see;
And, er we goo, a bed or too I can provide anoon;
For in my mynde of all mankynde I love but you alone."

"Loo! yet before ye must doo more, yf ye wyl goo with me—
As cutte your here up by your ere, your kirtle by the knee, 110
Wyth bowe in hande, for to withstonde your enmys, yf nede be,
And this same nyght before daylyght to woodward wyl I flee;
And if ye wyl all this fulfylle, doo it shortely as ye can;
Ellis wil I to the grenewode goo, alone, a banysshyd man."

"I shal, as now, do more for you than longeth to womanhede, 115
To short my here, a bowe to bere to shote in time of nede.
O my swete moder, before all other, for you have I most drede;
But now adiew! I must ensue, wher fortune doth me leede.
All this make ye; now lete us flee, the day cum fast upon;
For in my mynde of all mankynde I love but you alone." 120

"Nay, nay, not soo, ye shal not goo! and I shal tell you why:
Your appetyte is to be lyght of love, I wele aspie;

75. **rescous**, rescue. 88. **rove**, roof. 93. **oo**, one. 106. **hele**, health. 110. **kirtle**, skirt. 118. **ensue**, follow.

For right as ye have sayd to me, in lykewise hardely
Ye wolde answere, whosoever it were, in way of company.
It is sayd of olde, 'sone hote, sone colde,' and so is a woman; 125
Wherfore I too the woode wyl goo, alone, a banysshid man."

"Yef ye take hede, yet is noo nede, suche wordis to say bee me,
For oft ye preyd, and longe assayed, or I you lovid, perdee!
And though that I of auncestry a barons doughter bee,
Yet have you proved how I you loved, a squyer of lowe degree, 130
And ever shal, what so befalle, to dey therfore anoon;
For in my mynde of all mankynde I love but you alone."

"A barons childe to be begyled, it were a curssed dede,
To be felaw with an outlawe, almyghty God forbede!
Yet bettyr were the power squyer alone to forest yede, 135
Than ye shal say, another day, that be my wyked dede
Ye were betrayed; wherfore, good maide, the best red that I can,
Is that I too the grenewode goo, alone, a banysshed man."

"Whatsoever befalle, I never shal of this thing you upbraid;
But yf ye goo and leve me so, than have ye me betraied. 140
Remembre you wele how that ye dele, for yf ye, as ye sayde,
Be so unkynde to leve behynde your love, the Notbrowne Maide,
Trust me truly that I shal dey sone after ye be gone;
For in my mynde of all mankynde I love but you alone."

"Yef that ye went, ye shulde repent, for in the forest now 145
I have purveid me of a maide, whom I love more than you—
Another fayrer than ever ye were, I dare it wel avowe;
And of you both, eche shulde be wrothe with other, as I trowe.
It were myn ease to lyve in pease; so wyl I yf I can;
Wherfore I to the wode wyl goo, alone, a banysshid man." 150

"Though in the wood I undirstode ye had a paramour,
All this may nought remeve my thought, but that I wyl be your;
And she shal fynde me softe and kynde, and curteis every our,
Glad to fulfylle all that she wylle commaunde me, to my power;
For had ye, loo! an hondred moo, yet wolde I be that one; 155
For in my mynde of all mankynde I love but you alone."

"Myn oune dere love, I see the prove that ye be kynde and trewe;
Of mayde and wyfe, in all my lyf, the best that ever I knewe!
Be mery and glad, be no more sad, the case is chaungéd newe;
For it were ruthe that for your trouth you shuld have cause to rewe. 160
Be not dismayed, whatsoever I sayd, to you whan I began,
I wyl not too the grenewode goo, I am noo banysshyd man."

"Theis tidingis be more glad to me than to be made a quene,
Yf I were sure they shuld endure; but it is often seen,
When men wyl breke promyse, they speke the wordis on the splene. 165
Ye shape some wyle, me to begyle, and stele fro me, I wene.
Then were the case wurs than it was, and I more woo-begone;
For in my mynde of all mankynde I love but you alone."

"Ye shal not nede further to drede, I wyl not disparage
You, God defende, sith you descende of so grete a lynage. 170

127. **Yef**, if. **bee**, concerning. 128. **or**, ere. 131. **dey**, die. 135. **power**, poor. **yede**, gone. 136. **be**, by. 137. **red I can.** See note on line 29.

165. **on the splene.** The spleen was believed to be the seat of guile and anger. 166. **wene**, believe.

Now understonde, to Westmerlande,
whiche is my herytage,
I wyle you bringe, and wyth a rynge, be
wey of maryage,
I wyl you take, and lady make, as
shortly as I can;
Thus have ye wone an erles son, and not
a bannysshyd man."

Here may ye see that wymen be in love
meke, kinde, and stable; 175
Late never man repreve them than, or
calle them variable,
But rather prey God that we may to
them be confortable—
Whiche somtyme provyth suche as he
loveth, yf they be charitable.
For sith men wolde that wymen sholde
be meke to them echeon,
Moche more ought they to God obey,
and serve but hym alone.

(c. 1500)

171. **Westmerlande**, Westmorland, a shire in northwest England. 176. **Late**, let. 178. **Whiche**, etc., Who sometimes tests those whom he loves, to see if they are charitable. 179-180. **For**, etc. Here is a medieval moral tag which disappears in later lyric poetry. The dialogue form is not much used after the sixteenth century, but see A. E. Housman's "O See How Thick the Goldcup Flowers" (page 618).

JOHN BARBOUR (1316-1395)

FREDOME

A ! Fredome is a noble thing!
Fredome mayse man to haiff liking;
Fredome all solace to man giffis—
He levys at ese that frely levys!
A noble hart may haiff nane ese, 5
Na ellys nocht that may him plese,
Gyffe fredome fail; for fre liking
Is yarnyt our all othir thing.
Na he that ay has levyt fre
May nocht knaw weill the propyrté, 10
The angyre, na the wretchyt dom
That is complyt to foule thyrldome.
Bot gyff he had assayit it,
Than all perquer he suld it wyt;
And suld think fredome mar to prise 15
Than all the gold in warld that is.
Thus contrar thingis evermar
Discoweryngis off the tothir ar.

Fredome. This is an excerpt from Barbour's poem, *The Bruce* (lines 225-242). Cf. "A Man's a Man for A' That" (page 446), "Scots, Wha Hae" (page 446), and "Patriotism" (page 472). 2. **Fredome mayse**, etc., "freedom gives a man liberty." 5. **haiff**, have. 7. **Gyffe**, if. 8. **yarnyt our**, longed for o'er. 10. **propyrté**, "condition peculiar to." 12. **complyt**, etc., complete in foul thralldom. 14. **Than all**, etc., "then thoroughly he should know it." 15. **And suld**, "and should think freedome more to be prized."

SIXTEENTH CENTURY

NOTE

The sixteenth century shows the influence upon England of the Renaissance and the development of a conscious, national patriotism. The native tradition of simple folk songs continues, but tends to merge in content and form with the lyric products of the Renaissance. That the two fused is characteristic of the English, who have always absorbed what they wished of a foreign literary movement, and have cast aside the rest. For example, the experiments of Wyatt and Surrey with the Italian sonnet form led naturally to Shakespeare's English variation, and since his day both forms of sonnet have persisted with equal popularity. The age was one of youthful and unrestricted experimentation; lyric poetry was at this time an informal pastime of statesmen, soldiers, divines, and playwrights, while the inconsequential way in which it was regarded is revealed in the anonymous publication of much lyric poetry in general anthologies of verse. In this century every phase of lyric poetry seems to be represented, from the simple folk songs included in the dramas, through the elaborate sonnet series of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, to the magnificent *Eclogues*, *Hymns*, and *Odes* of Spenser.

ANONYMOUS

AS YE CAME FROM THE HOLY LAND

As ye came from the holy land
Of Walsinghame,
Met you not with my true love
By the way as you came?

How should I know your true love, 5
That have met many a one
As I came from the holy land,
That have come, that have gone?

She is neither white nor brown,
But as the heavens fair; 10
There is none hath her form divine
In the earth or the air.

2. **Walsinghame.** A famous medieval pilgrimage was to the church of the Virgin at Walsingham, Norfolkshire.

Such a one did I meet, good sir,
Such an angelic face,
Who like a nymph, like a queen, did appear 15
In her gait, in her grace.

She hath left me here alone,
All alone, as unknown,
Who sometime did me lead with herself,
And me loved as her own. 20

What's the cause that she leaves you alone
And a new way doth take,
That sometime did love you as her own,
And her joy did you make?

I have loved her all my youth, 25
But now am old, as you see;
Love likes not the falling fruit,
Nor the withered tree.

Know that Love is a careless child,
And forgets promise past; 30
He is blind, he is deaf when he list,
And in faith never fast.

His desire is a dureless content,
And a trustless joy;
He is won with a world of despair, 35
And is lost with a toy.

Of womenkind such indeed is the love,
Or the word love abuséd,
Under which many childish desires
And conceits are excuséd. 40

But true love is a durable fire,
In the mind ever burning,
Never sick, never dead, never cold,
From itself never turning.

(COMPOSED BEFORE 1550)

THERE IS A LADY SWEET AND KIND

There is a Lady sweet and kind;
Was never face so pleased my mind.
I did but see her passing by,
And yet I love her till I die.

Her gesture, motion, and her smiles, 5
Her wit, her voice my heart beguiles,
Beguiles my heart, I know not why,
And yet I love her till I die.

Cupid is wingéd and doth range,
Her country so my love doth change; 10
But change she earth, or change she sky,
Yet will I love her till I die.

(COMPOSED ABOUT 1580)

LOVE NOT ME FOR COMELY GRACE

Love not me for comely grace,
For my pleasing eye or face,
Nor for any outward part,
No, nor for a constant heart;
For these may fail or turn to ill, 5
So thou and I shall sever.
Keep, therefore, a true woman's eye,
And love me still but know not why—
So hast thou the same reason still
To dote upon me ever!

(COMPOSED ABOUT 1580)

ICARUS

Love winged my hopes and taught me how to fly
Far from base earth, but not to mount too high;
For true pleasure
Lives in measure,
Which if men forsake, 5
Blinded they into folly run and grief for pleasure take.

But my vain hopes, proud of their new-taught flight,
Enamored sought to woo the sun's fair light,
Whose rich brightness
Moved their lightness 10

18. **as**, as if. 33. **dureless**, fleeting.

10. **so**, likewise. 11. **But**, etc., but whether she lives or dies.

Icarus. Daedalus, an Athenian inventor who was exiled to the Island of Crete with his son Icarus, escaped on artificial wings to Sicily. Icarus soared so near the sun as to melt the wax on his wings, and was drowned in the Icarian Sea.

To aspire so high
That all scorched and consumed with fire now drowned in woe they lie.

And none but Love their woeful hap did rue,
For Love did know that their desires were true;
Though fate frownéd, 15
And now drownéd
They in sorrow dwell;
It was the purest light of heaven for whose fair love they fell.

(COMPOSED ABOUT 1580)

THE NEW JERUSALEM

Hierusalem, my happy home,
When shall I come to thee?
When shall my sorrows have an end?
Thy joys when shall I see?

O happy harbor of the Saints! 5
O sweet and pleasant soil!
In thee no sorrow may be found,
No grief, no care, no toil.

There lust and lucre cannot dwell,
There envy bears no sway; 10
There is no hunger, heat, nor cold,
But pleasure every way.

Thy walls are made of precious stones,
Thy bulwarks diamonds square;
Thy gates are of right orient pearl, 15
Exceeding rich and rare.

Thy turrets and thy pinnacles
With carbuncles do shine;
Thy very streets are paved with gold,
Surpassing clear and fine. 20

Ah, my sweet home, Hierusalem,
Would God I were in thee!
Would God my woes were at an end,
Thy joys that I might see!

Thy gardens and thy gallant walks 25
Continually are green;
There grow such sweet and pleasant flowers
As nowhere else are seen.

15. **orient**, eastern, bright.

Quite through the streets, with silver sound,
The flood of Life doth flow; 30
Upon whose banks on every side
The wood of Life doth grow.

There trees for evermore bear fruit,
And evermore do spring;
There evermore the angels sit, 35
And evermore do sing.

Our Lady sings *Magnificat*
With tones surpassing sweet;
And all the virgins bear their part,
Sitting about her feet. 40

Hierusalem, my happy home,
Would God I were in thee!
Would God my woes were at an end,
Thy joys that I might see!

(COMPOSED BEFORE 1550)

CRABBED AGE AND YOUTH

Crabbed Age and Youth
Cannot live together:
Youth is full of pleasance,
Age is full of care;
Youth like summer morn, 5
Age like winter weather;
Youth like summer brave,
Age like winter bare.
Youth is full of sport,
Age's breath is short; 10
Youth is nimble, Age is lame;
Youth is hot and bold,
Age is weak and cold;
Youth is wild, and Age is tame.
Age, I do abhor thee; 15
Youth, I do adore thee;
O my Love, my Love is young!
Age, I do defy thee.
O sweet shepherd, hie thee!
For methinks thou stay'st too long.

(1599)

37. **Magnificat**, the psalm of thanksgiving of the Virgin Mary, commencing "My soul doth magnify the Lord" (Luke, i, 46-55).

Crabbed Age and Youth. 19. **O sweet shepherd**, etc. Attributed sometimes to Shakespeare and sometimes to Thomas Deloney. English poetry borrowed from the Greek poet Theocritus (third century B.C.), whose Idylls—poems of shepherd life—contain love poems, elegies, musical contests, and magic spells. The names of his shepherds, Corydon, Thyrsis, Amaryllis, etc., are used in English pastoral poetry.

SIR THOMAS WYATT (1503?-1542)

FORGET NOT YET

THE LOVER BESEECHETH HIS MISTRESS NOT TO FORGET HIS STEADFAST FAITH AND TRUE INTENT

Forget not yet the tried intent
Of such a truth as I have meant;
My great travail so gladly spent,
Forget not yet!

Forget not yet when first began 5
The weary life ye know, since whan
The suit, the service, none tell can;
Forget not yet!

Forget not yet the great assays,
The cruel wrong, the scornful ways, 10
The painful patience in delays,
Forget not yet!

Forget not! Oh, forget not this!—
How long ago hath been, and is,
The mind that never meant amiss— 15
Forget not yet!

Forget not then thine own approved,
The which so long hath thee so loved,
Whose steadfast faith yet never moved,
Forget not this! (1557)

HENRY HOWARD, EARL OF SURREY (1517?-1547)

THE MEANS TO ATTAIN HAPPY LIFE

Martial, the things that do attain
The happy life be these, I find:
The richesse left, not got with pain;
The fruitful ground, the quiet mind;

The equal friend; no grudge, no strife; 5
No charge of rule, nor governance;
Without disease, the healthful life;
The household of continuance;
The mean diet, no delicate fare;
True wisdom joined with simpleness; 10
The night dischargéd of all care,
Where wine the wit may not oppress.

The faithful wife, without debate;
Such sleeps as may beguile the night;
Contented with thine own estate, 15
Ne wish for death, ne fear his might.
(1557)

The Means to Attain Happy Life. 1. **Martial**, a Roman satirist of the first century A.D., from whose Epigrams (x, 47) this poem was translated.

SIR EDWARD DYER (c. 1550-1607)

MY MIND TO ME A KINGDOM IS

My mind to me a kingdom is;
Such present joys therein I find
That it excels all other bliss
That earth affords or grows by kind.
Though much I want which most would have, 5
Yet still my mind forbids to crave.

No princely pomp, no wealthy store,
No force to win the victory,
No wily wit to salve a sore,
No shape to feed a loving eye; 10
To none of these I yield as thrall—
For why? My mind doth serve for all.

I see how plenty surfeits oft,
And hasty climbers soon do fall;
I see that those which are aloft 15
Mishap doth threaten most of all;
They get with toil, they keep with fear—
Such cares my mind could never bear.

Content to live, this is my stay;
I seek no more than may suffice; 20
I press to bear no haughty sway;
Look, what I lack my mind supplies.
Lo, thus I triumph like a king,
Content with that my mind doth bring.

Some have too much, yet still do crave;
I little have, and seek no more. 26
They are but poor, though much they have,

My Mind to Me a Kingdom Is. Cf. "To Althea, from Prison" (page 388), and "The Happy Warrior" (page 463). 4. **kind**, nature. 5. **want**, lack. **which**, who.

And I am rich with little store.
They poor, I rich; they beg, I give;
They lack, I leave; they pine, I live. 30

I laugh not at another's loss;
I grudge not at another's pain;
No worldly waves my mind can toss;
My state at one doth still remain.
I fear no foe, I fawn no friend; 35
I loathe not life, nor dread my end.

Some weigh their pleasure by their lust,
Their wisdom by their rage of will;
Their treasure is their only trust;
A cloakéd craft their store of skill. 40
But all the pleasure that I find
Is to maintain a quiet mind.

My wealth is health and perfect ease;
My conscience clear my chief defense;
I neither seek by bribes to please, 45
Nor by deceit to breed offense.
Thus do I live; thus will I die;
Would all did so as well as I!

(1588)

JOHN LYLY (1554?-1606)

CUPID AND MY CAMPASPE PLAYED

Cupid and my Campaspe played
At cards for kisses—Cupid paid.
He stakes his quiver, bow, and arrows,
His mother's doves, and team of sparrows;
Loses them too; then down he throws 5
The coral of his lip, the rose
Growing on's cheek (but none knows how);
With these, the crystal of his brow,
And then the dimple of his chin—
All these did my Campaspe win. 10
At last he set her both his eyes—
She won, and Cupid blind did rise.
O Love, has she done this for thee?
What shall, alas! become of me?

(1584)

28. **store**, supply. 34. **at one**, the same. **still**, ever. *Cupid and My Campaspe Played.* From the comedy *Alexander and Campaspe.* It is one of the many beautiful lyrics written by the Elizabethan dramatists. Campaspe was the beloved of Alexander the Great.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY (1554-1586)

THE BARGAIN

My true love hath my heart, and I have his,
By just exchange one for another given.
I hold his dear, and mine he cannot miss;
There never was a better bargain driven.
My true love hath my heart, and I have his. 5

His heart in me keeps him and me in one;
My heart in him his thoughts and senses guides.
He loves my heart, for once it was his own;
I cherish his because in me it bides.
My true love hath my heart, and I have his.

c. 1580 (1598)

LOVE IS DEAD

Ring out your bells, let mourning shows be spread;
For Love is dead.
All Love is dead, infected
With plague of deep disdain;
Worth, as nought worth, rejected, 5
And Faith fair scorn doth gain.
From so ungrateful fancy,
From such a female franzie,
From them that use men thus,
Good Lord, deliver us! 10

Weep, neighbors, weep; do you not hear it said
That Love is dead?
His deathbed, peacock's folly;
His winding-sheet is shame;
His will, false-seeming holy; 15
His sole exec'tor, blame.
From so ungrateful fancy,
From such a female franzie,
From them that use men thus,
Good Lord, deliver us! 20

Love Is Dead. One of many jesting poems on love. Cf. "Since There's No Help" (page 360), "Why So Pale and Wan" (page 387), and "The Lover's Resolution" (page 402). 8. **franzie**, frenzy. 13. **peacock's folly**, pride.

Let dirge be sung, and trentals rightly read,
For Love is dead;
Sir Wrong his tomb ordaineth
My mistress' marble heart;
Which epitaph containeth, 25
"Her eyes were once his dart."
From so ungrateful fancy,
From such a female franzie,
From them that use men thus,
Good Lord, deliver us! 30

Alas, I lie. Rage hath this error bred;
Love is not dead;
Love is not dead, but sleepeth
In her unmatchéd mind,
Where she his counsel keepeth, 35
Till due deserts she find.
Therefore from so vile fancy,
To call such wit a franzie,
Who Love can temper thus,
Good Lord, deliver us!

(1595)

ASTROPHEL AND STELLA

I

Loving in truth, and fain in verse my love to show,
That she, dear she, might take some pleasure of my pain—
Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make her know,
Knowledge might pity win, and pity grace obtain—
I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe, 5
Studying inventions fine, her wits to entertain,
Oft turning others' leaves, to see if thence would flow
Some fresh and fruitful showers upon my sunburned brain.
But words came halting forth, wanting Invention's stay;
Invention, Nature's child, fled stepdame Study's blows; 10
And others' feet still seemed but strangers in my way.
Thus, great with child to speak, and helpless in my throes,
Biting my truant pen, beating myself for spite—
"Fool," said my Muse to me, "look in thy heart, and write."

XXXI

With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the skies!
How silently, and with how wan a face!
What, may it be that even in heavenly place
That busy archer his sharp arrows tries!
Sure, if that long-with-love-acquainted eyes 5
Can judge of love, thou feel'st a lover's case,
I read it in thy looks; thy languished grace,
To me, that feel the like, thy state descries.
Then, ev'n of fellowship, O Moon, tell me,
Is constant love deemed there but want of wit? 10
Are beauties there as proud as here they be?
Do they above love to be loved, and yet
Those lovers scorn whom that love doth possess?
Do they call virtue there ungratefulness?

XLI

Having this day my horse, my hand, my lance
Guided so well that I obtained the prize,
Both by the judgment of the English eyes
And of some sent from that sweet enemy, France,
Horsemen my skill in horsemanship advance, 5

21. **trentals**, thirty masses said for the dead, usually one a day for a month.

Astrophel and Stella. A sonnet sequence written by Sidney, under the name of Astrophel, to Penelope Devereux, under the name of Stella. The Elizabethan sonnet sequences imitated those of Petrarch (1304-1374), the father of the Italian Renaissance. He addressed his sonnets to his beloved, Laura, and inaugurated the convention of flattery and elaborate phraseology in Renaissance love poetry. *I*. 9. **wanting Invention's stay**, lacking the aid of Wit.

Town folks my strength; a daintier judge applies
His praise too slight which from good use doth rise.
Some lucky wits impute it but to chance;
Others, because of both sides I do take
My blood from them who did excel in this, 10
Think Nature me a man-at-arms did make.
How far they shot awry! The true cause is,
Stella looked on, and from her heavenly face
Sent forth the beams which made so fair my race. (1591)

LEAVE ME, O LOVE, WHICH REACHEST BUT TO DUST

Leave me, O Love, which reachest but to dust,
And thou, my mind, aspire to higher things!
Grow rich in that which never taketh rust.
Whatever fades, but fading pleasure brings.
Draw in thy beams, and humble all thy might 5
To that sweet yoke where lasting freedoms be,
Which breaks the clouds and opens forth the light
That doth both shine and give us sight to see.
O take fast hold! Let that light be thy guide
In this small course which birth draws out to death, 10
And think how evil becometh him to slide
Who seeketh heaven, and comes of heavenly breath.
Then farewell, world! thy uttermost I see;
Eternal Love, maintain thy life in me! (1598)

XLI. 7. **use**, manners.

EDMUND SPENSER (1552-1599)

PROTHALAMION

Calm was the day, and through the trembling air
Sweet, breathing Zephyrus did softly play
A gentle spirit, that lightly did delay
Hot Titan's beams, which then did glister fair;
When I (whom sullen care, 5
Through discontent of my long fruitless stay
In princes' court, and expectation vain
Of idle hopes, which still do fly away,
Like empty shadows, did afflict my brain)
Walked forth to ease my pain 10
Along the shore of silver streaming Thames;
Whose rutty bank, the which his river hems,
Was painted all with variable flowers,
And all the meads adorned with dainty gems
Fit to deck maidens' bowers, 15
And crown their paramours
Against the bridal day, which is not long—
Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song.

There, in a meadow, by the river's side,
A flock of nymphs I chancéd to espy, 20
All lovely daughters of the flood thereby,
With goodly greenish locks, all loose untied,
As each had been a bride.
And each one had a little wicker basket,
Made of fine twigs, entrailéd curiously,
In which they gathered flowers to fill their flasket, 26
And with fine fingers cropt full feateously
The tender stalks on high.
Of every sort, which in that meadow grew,

Prothalamion. This poem was written by Spenser in 1596 to celebrate the double marriage of two daughters of the Earl of Worcester to Henry Guilford and William Peter. The verse is an elaborate lyric form, imitative of the marriage odes of the Greeks and Romans. *Prothalamion* is the ode preceding the marriage ceremony. 2. **Zephyrus**, the west wind. 4. **Titan**, the sun. 8. **still**, ever. 12. **rutty**, rooty. 25. **entrailéd**, woven. 27. **feateously**, neatly.

They gathered some: the violet, pallid blue, 30
The little daisy, that at evening closes,
The virgin lily, and the primrose true,
With store of vermeil roses,
To deck their bridegroom's posies
Against the bridal day, which was not long— 35
Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song.

With that I saw two swans of goodly hue
Come softly swimming down along the Lee;
Two fairer birds I yet did never see.
The snow, which doth the top of Pindus strew, 40
Did never whiter shew,
Nor Jove himself, when he a swan would be
For love of Leda, whiter did appear;
Yet Leda was, they say, as white as he,
Yet not so white as these, nor nothing near; 45
So purely white they were,
That even the gentle stream, the which them bare,
Seemed foul to them, and bade his billows spare
To wet their silken feathers, lest they might
Soil their fair plumes with water not so fair, 50
And mar their beauties bright,
That shone as heaven's light,
Against their bridal day, which was not long—
Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song.

Eftsoons the nymphs, which now had flowers their fill, 55
Ran all in haste to see that silver brood,
As they came floating on the crystal flood;
Whom when they saw, they stood amazéd still,
Their wondering eyes to fill;
Them seemed they never saw a sight so fair 60
Of fowls so lovely, that they sure did deem
Them heavenly born, or to be that same pair
Which through the sky draw Venus' silver team;
For sure they did not seem
To be begot of any earthly seed, 65
But rather angels, or of angel's breed;
Yet were they bred of summer's heat, they say,
In sweetest season, when each flower and weed
The earth did fresh array;
So fresh they seemed as day, 70
Even as their bridal day, which was not long—
Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song.

Then forth they all out of their baskets drew
Great store of flowers, the honor of the field,
That to the sense did fragrant odors yield, 75
All which upon those goodly birds they threw
And all the waves did strew,
That like old Peneus' waters they did seem,
When down along by pleasant Tempe's shore,
Scattered with flowers, through Thessaly they stream, 80
That they appear, through lilies' plenteous store,
Like a bride's chamber floor.
Two of those nymphs meanwhile, two garlands bound
Of freshest flowers which in that mead they found,
The which presenting all in trim array, 85
Their snowy foreheads there withal they crowned,
Whilst one did sing this lay,
Prepared against that day,
Against their bridal day, which was not long—
Sweet Thames! run softly till I end my song. 90

33. **vermeil**, red. 38. **Lee** (Lea), a tributary of the Thames River. 40. **Pindus**, a mountain range in Greece. 43. **Leda**, a mythical queen of Sparta, whom Jove wooed in the form of a swan, and to whom she bore Helen and Pollux.

78. **Peneus**, a river in Thessaly which runs through the Vale of Tempe, sacred to the Muses.

"Ye gentle birds! the world's fair ornament,
And heaven's glory, whom this happy hour
Doth lead unto your lover's blissful bower,
Joy may you have, and gentle hearts' content
Of your love's couplement; 95
And let fair Venus, that is queen of love,
With her heart-quelling son upon you smile,
Whose smile, they say, hath virtue to remove
All love's dislike, and friendship's faulty guile
Forever to assoil; 100
Let endless peace your steadfast hearts accord,
And blessed plenty wait upon your board;
And let your bed with pleasures chaste abound,
That fruitful issue may to you afford,
Which may your foes confound, 105
And make your joys redound
Upon your bridal day, which is not long—"
Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song.

So ended she; and all the rest around
To her redoubled that her undersong,
Which said their bridal day should not be long. 111
And gentle Echo from the neighbor ground
Their accents did resound.
So forth those joyous birds did pass along,
Adown the Lee, that to them murmured low, 115
As he would speak, but that he lacked a tongue,
Yet did by signs his glad affection show,
Making his stream run slow.
And all the fowl which in his flood did dwell
'Gan flock about these twain, that did excel 120
The rest, so far as Cynthia doth shend
The lesser stars. So they, enrangéd well,
Did on those two attend,
And their best service lend
Against their wedding day, which was not long— 125
Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song.

At length they all to merry London came,
To merry London, my most kindly nurse,
That to me gave this life's first native source,
Though from another place I take my name, 130
An house of ancient fame.
There when they came, whereas those bricky towers
The which on Thames' broad, aged back do ride,
Where now the studious lawyers have their bowers,
There whilom wont the Templar Knights to bide 135
Till they decayed through pride.
Next whereunto there stands a stately place,
Where oft I gainéd gifts and goodly grace
Of that great lord, which therein wont to dwell,
Whose want too well now feels my friendless case; 140
But ah! here fits not well
Old woes, but joys, to tell
Against the bridal day, which is not long—
Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song.

Yet therein now doth lodge a noble peer,
Great England's glory, and the world's wide wonder, 146
Whose dreadful name late through all Spain did thunder,

97. **heart-quelling son**, Cupid. 98. **virtue**, power. 121. **so far**, etc., "as the goddess of the moon (known as Cynthia, Diana, or Artemis) puts to shame the lesser stars."

130. **another place**, Lancashire, where lived the Spensers of Hurstwood and Althorpe. 132. **whereas**, where. 135-136. These lines refer to the Temple, which had passed out of the hands of the Knights Templars into those of the lawyers of London. 137. **stately place**, the palace of the Earl of Leicester, Spenser's patron, who died in 1588. 145. **noble peer.** The Earl of Essex took up his residence in Leicester House after 1588. 146-147. The reference is to the capture, in 1596, of Cadiz, where Essex commanded the land forces. Five years later he was convicted of treason, and executed.

And Hercules' two pillars standing near
Did make to quake and fear:
Fair branch of honor, flower of chivalry!
That fillest England with thy triumph's fame, 151
Joy have thou of thy noble victory,
And endless happiness of thine own name,
That promiseth the same;
That through thy prowess, and victorious arms, 155
Thy country may be freed from foreign harms;
And great Elisa's glorious name may ring
Through all the world, filled with thy wide alarms,
Which some brave muse may sing
To ages following, 160
Upon the bridal day, which is not long—
Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song.

From those high towers this noble lord issuing,
Like radiant Hesper, when his golden hair
In th' ocean billows he hath bathéd fair, 165
Descended to the river's open viewing,
With a great train ensuing.
Above the rest were goodly to be seen
Two gentle knights of lovely face and feature
Beseeming well the bower of any queen,
With gifts of wit, and ornaments of nature, 171
Fit for so goodly stature,
That like the twins of Jove they seemed in sight,
Which deck the baldrick of the heavens bright;
They two, forth pacing to the river's side, 175
Received those two fair brides, their love's delight;
Which, at th' appointed tide,
Each one did make his bride
Against their bridal day, which is not long—
Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song. (1596)

148. **Hercules' two pillars**, the high promontories bounding the western exit of the Mediterranean Sea. The ancients supposed that Hercules piled them up as landmarks. 157. **great Elisa**, Queen Elizabeth. 164. **Hesper**, the evening star, which appeared to rise from the ocean. 173. **twins of Jove**, the constellation of Castor and Pollux, situated near the Milky Way. Castor was the son of Leda and Tyndareus, king of Sparta; Pollux was his half-brother (see note on line 43). On the death of Castor, Jove made the brothers stars. 174. **baldrick**, belt, referring here to the Milky Way.

GEORGE PEELE (c. 1558-c. 1597)

FAIR AND FAIR

Oenone.
Fair and fair, and twice so fair,
As fair as any may be;
The fairest shepherd on our green,
A love for any lady.
Paris.
Fair and fair, and twice so fair, 5
As fair as any may be;
Thy love is fair for thee alone,
And for no other lady.
Oenone.
My love is fair, my love is gay,
As fresh as bin the flowers in May, 10
And of my love my roundelay,
My merry, merry, merry roundelay,
Concludes with Cupid's curse—
"They that do change old love for new,
Pray gods they change for worse!" 15
Ambo Simul.
They that do change old love for new,
Pray gods they change for worse!
Oenone.
Fair and fair, etc.
Paris.
Fair and fair, etc.
Thy love is fair, etc. 20
Oenone.
My love can pipe, my love can sing,
My love can many a pretty thing,
And of his lovely praises ring
My merry, merry, merry roundelay,
Amen to Cupid's curse— 25
"They that do change," etc.
Paris.
They that do change, etc.
Ambo.
Fair and fair, etc. (1584)

Fair and Fair. From *The Arraignment of Paris*, a comedy. Paris, son of King Priam, first loved Oenone, a nymph who lived on Mt. Ida, near Troy. Cf. Tennyson's "Œnone" (page 522). 10. **bin**, are. 16. **Ambo Simul**, both together.

A FAREWELL TO ARMS

(TO QUEEN ELIZABETH)

His golden locks Time hath to silver turned;
O Time too swift, O swiftness never ceasing!
His youth 'gainst time and age hath ever spurned,
But spurned in vain; youth waneth by increasing.
Beauty, strength, youth, are flowers but fading seen; 5
Duty, faith, love, are roots, and ever green.

His helmet now shall make a hive for bees;
And, lovers' sonnets turned to holy psalms,
A man-at-arms must now serve on his knees,
And feed on prayers, which are Age his alms. 10
But though from court to cottage he depart,
His saint is sure of his unspotted heart.

And when he saddest sits in homely cell,
He'll teach his swains this carol for a song—
"Blest be the hearts that wish my sovereign well, 15
Curst be the souls that think her any wrong."
Goddess, allow this aged man his right
To be your beadsman now that was your knight. (1597)

ROBERT GREENE (1560?-1592)

SEPHESTIA'S SONG TO HER CHILD

Weep not, my wanton, smile upon my knee;
When thou art old there's grief enough for thee.
Mother's wag, pretty boy,
Father's sorrow, father's joy;
When thy father first did see 5
Such a boy by him and me,
He was glad, I was woe;
Fortune changéd made him so,
When he left his pretty boy
Last his sorrow, first his joy. 10

Weep not, my wanton, smile upon my knee;
When thou art old there's grief enough for thee.
Streaming tears that never stint,
Like pearl-drops from a flint,
Fell by course from his eyes, 15
That one another's place supplies;
Thus he grieved in every part,
Tears of blood fell from his heart,
When he left his pretty boy,
Father's sorrow, father's joy. 20

Weep not, my wanton, smile upon my knee;
When thou art old there's grief enough for thee.
The wanton smiled, father wept,
Mother cried, baby leapt;
More he crowed, more he cried, 25
Nature could not sorrow hide.
He must go, he must kiss
Child and mother, baby bless,
For he left his pretty boy,
Father's sorrow, father's joy. 30
Weep not, my wanton, smile upon my knee,
When thou art old there's grief enough for thee. (1589)

THE SHEPHERD'S WIFE'S SONG

Ah, what is love? It is a pretty thing,
As sweet unto a shepherd as a king;
And sweeter, too,
For kings have cares that wait upon a crown,

A Farewell to Arms. 8. **sonnets.** Here it means merely songs. 10. **Age his,** Age's. 18. **beadsman,** one who is engaged to pray for others.

Sephestia's Song. From *Menaphon,* a prose romance. Sephestia, a princess, whose husband has disappeared, is cast ashore on a mythical island, where she is cared for by the shepherd Menaphon, and is finally restored to her husband. 1. **wanton,** carefree boy.

The Shepherd's Wife's Song. From *A Mourning Garment,* an autobiographical treatise. Greene was a lovable and brilliant poet, whose debauches hastened his death. Cf. this poem with "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" (page 361) and "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd" (page 361). These poems illustrate the pastoral convention.

And cares can make the sweetest love to frown. 5
Ah then, ah then,
If country loves such sweet desires do gain,
What lady would not love a shepherd swain?

His flocks are folded, he comes home at night,
As merry as a king in his delight; 10
And merrier, too,
For kings bethink them what the state require,
Where shepherds careless carol by the fire.
Ah then, ah then,
If country loves such sweet desires do gain, 15
What lady would not love a shepherd swain?

He kisseth first, then sits as blithe to eat
His cream and curds as doth the king his meat;
And blither, too,
For kings have often fears when they do sup, 20
Where shepherds dread no poison in their cup.
Ah then, ah then,
If country loves such sweet desires do gain,
What lady would not love a shepherd swain?

To bed he goes, as wanton then, I ween,
As is a king in dalliance with a queen; 26
More wanton, too,
For kings have many griefs affects to move,
Where shepherds have no greater grief than love.
Ah then, ah then, 30
If country loves such sweet desires do gain,
What lady would not love a shepherd swain?

Upon his couch of straw he sleeps as sound
As doth the king upon his bed of down;
More sounder, too, 35
For cares cause kings full oft their sleep to spill,
Where weary shepherds lie and snort their fill.
Ah then, ah then,
If country loves such sweet desires do gain,
What lady would not love a shepherd swain? 40

Thus with his wife he spends the year, as blithe
As doth the king at every tide or sithe;
And blither, too,
For kings have wars and broils to take in hand
When shepherds laugh and love upon the land. 45
Ah then, ah then,
If country loves such sweet desires do gain,
What lady would not love a shepherd swain? (1590)

28. **affects to move**, to stir the emotions.

36. **spill**, lose. 37. **snort**, snore. 42. **tide or sithe**, season or time.

SONG

Sweet are the thoughts that savor of content;
The quiet mind is richer than a crown.
Sweet are the nights in careless slumber spent;
The poor estate scorns fortune's angry frown.
Such sweet content, such minds, such sleep, such bliss, 5
Beggars enjoy, when princes oft do miss.

The homely house that harbors quiet rest;
The cottage that affords no pride nor care;
The mean that 'grees with country music best;
The sweet consort of mirth and music's fare; 10
Obscuréd life sets down a type of bliss—
A mind content both crown and kingdom is. (1591)

Song. From *The Farewell to Folly*, a prose tract.
10. **consort**, union.

MICHAEL DRAYTON (1563-1631)

TO THE VIRGINIAN VOYAGE

You brave heroic minds,
Worthy your country's name,
  That honor still pursue,
  Go and subdue!
Whilst loitering hinds 5
Lurk here at home with shame.

Britons, you stay too long;
Quickly aboard bestow you!
  And with a merry gale
  Swell your stretched sail, 10
With vows as strong
As the winds that blow you!

Your course securely steer;
West-and-by-south forth keep!
  Rocks, lee-shores, nor shoals, 15
  When Eolus scowls,
You need not fear,
So absolute the deep.

And, cheerfully at sea,
Success you still entice, 20
  To get the pearl and gold;
  And ours to hold,
Virginia,
Earth's only Paradise,

Where Nature hath in store 25
Fowl, venison, and fish;
  And the fruitful'st soil—
  Without your toil,
Three harvests more,
All greater than your wish. 30

And the ambitious vine
Crowns with his purple mass
  The cedar reaching high
  To kiss the sky,
The cypress, pine, 35
And useful sassafras.

To whom the Golden Age
Still Nature's laws doth give;
  Nor other cares attend,
  But them to defend 40
From winter's rage,
That long there doth not live.

When as the luscious smell
Of that delicious land,
  Above the seas that flows, 45
  The clear wind throws,
Your hearts to swell,
Approaching the dear strand,

In kenning of the shore
(Thanks to God first given!) 50
  O you, the happiest men,
  Be frolic then!
Let cannons roar,
Frightening the wide heaven!

And in regions far, 55
Such heroes bring ye forth
  As those from whom we came!
  And plant our name
Under that star
Not known unto our North! 60

And where in plenty grows
The laurel everywhere,
  Apollo's sacred tree,
  Your days may see
A poet's brows 65
To crown, that may sing there.

Thy *Voyages* attend,
Industrious Hakluyt!
  Whose reading shall inflame
  Men to seek fame; 70
And much commend
To after times thy wit.

(1605)

To the Virginian Voyage. This is one of the earliest poetic notices of the American colonies. Cf. "Bermudas" (page 404). 5. **hinds**, peasants, rustics. 16. **Eolus**, the Greek god of the winds. 49. **kenning**, sight. 67. **Voyages**, referring to Hakluyt's earliest book of *Voyages*, published in 1582.

SONNET FROM IDEA

LXI

Since there's no help, come, let us kiss and part!
Nay, I have done; you get no more of me!
And I am glad, yea, glad, with all my heart,
That thus so cleanly I myself can free.
Shake hands forever! Cancel all our vows! 5
And when we meet at any time again,

Sonnet from Idea. Cf. "Love Turns to Hate, They Say" (page 625).

Be it not seen in either of our brows
That we one jot of former love retain!
Now at the last gasp of Love's latest breath,
When, his pulse failing, Passion speechless lies, 10
When Faith is kneeling by his bed of death,
And Innocence is closing up his eyes—
Now, if thou wouldst, when all have given him over,
From death to life thou might'st him yet recover! (1619)

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE (1564-1593)

THE PASSIONATE SHEPHERD TO HIS LOVE

Come live with me and be my Love,
And we will all the pleasures prove
That hills and valleys, dales and fields,
Or woods or steepy mountain yields.

And we will sit upon the rocks, 5
And see the shepherds feed their flocks
By shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of roses
And a thousand fragrant posies; 10
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle;

A gown made of the finest wool
Which from our pretty lambs we pull;
Fair-linéd slippers for the cold, 15
With buckles of the purest gold;

A belt of straw and ivy buds
With coral clasps and amber studs—
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Come live with me and be my Love. 20

The shepherd swains shall dance and sing
For thy delight each May morning—
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me and be my Love.
(1599)

SIR WALTER RALEIGH (c. 1552-1618)

THE NYMPH'S REPLY TO THE SHEPHERD

If all the world and love were young,
And truth in every shepherd's tongue,
These pretty pleasures might me move,
To live with thee and be thy love.

But time drives flocks from field to fold, 5
When rivers rage, and rocks grow cold;
And Philomel becometh dumb;
The rest complains of cares to come.

The flowers do fade, and wanton fields
To wayward Winter reckoning yields; 10
A honey tongue, a heart of gall,
Is fancy's spring, but sorrow's fall.

Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy beds of roses,
Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies,
Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten, 15
In folly ripe, in reason rotten.

Thy belt of straw and ivy buds,
Thy coral clasps and amber studs,
All these in me no means can move,
To come to thee and be thy love. 20

But could youth last, and love still breed,
Had joys no date, nor age no need,
Then these delights my mind might move,
To live with thee and be thy love.
(1599)

THE LIE

Go, soul, the body's guest,
Upon a thankless arrant.
Fear not to touch the best;
The truth shall be thy warrant.
Go, since I needs must die, 5
And give the world the lie.

The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd. 7. **Philomel becometh dumb.** Philomela, in Greek legend, was a maiden whose tongue was slit. She was later changed into a nightingale. 9. **wanton,** luxuriant.

The Lie. Cf. this poem with "Invictus" (page 600), and "Say Not the Struggle Naught Availeth" (page 570). It represents Raleigh's disgust with the government of James I. 2. **arrant,** errand.

Say to the court it glows,
And shines like rotton wood;
Say to the church it shows
What's good, and doth no good. 10
If church and court reply,
Then give them both the lie.

Tell potentates they live
Acting by others' action,
Not loved unless they give, 15
Not strong but by a faction.
If potentates reply,
Give potentates the lie.

Tell men of high condition,
That manage the estate, 20
Their purpose is ambition,
Their practice only hate.
And if they once reply,
Then give them all the lie.

Tell them that brave it most, 25
They beg for more by spending,
Who, in their greatest cost,
Seek nothing but commending.
And if they make reply,
Then give them all the lie. 30

Tell zeal it wants devotion;
Tell love it is but lust;
Tell time it is but motion;
Tell flesh it is but dust.
And wish them not reply, 35
For thou must give the lie.

Tell age it daily wasteth;
Tell honor how it alters;
Tell beauty how she blasteth;
Tell favor how it falters— 40
And as they shall reply,
Give every one the lie.

Tell wit how much it wrangles
In tickle points of niceness;
Tell wisdom she entangles 45
Herself in over-wiseness.
And when they do reply,
Straight give them both the lie.

Tell physic of her boldness;
Tell skill it is pretension; 50
Tell charity of coldness;
Tell law it is contention.
And as they do reply,
So give them still the lie.

Tell fortune of her blindness; 55
Tell nature of decay;
Tell friendship of unkindness;
Tell justice of delay.
And if they will reply,
Then give them all the lie. 60

Tell arts they have no soundness,
But vary by esteeming;
Tell schools they want profoundness,
And stand too much on seeming.
If arts and schools reply, 65
Give arts and schools the lie.

Tell faith it's fled the city;
Tell how the country erreth;
Tell manhood shakes off pity;
Tell virtue least preferreth. 70
And if they do reply,
Spare not to give the lie.

So when thou hast, as I
Commanded thee, done blabbing,
Although to give the lie 75
Deserves no less than stabbing;
Yet stab at thee who will,
No stab the soul can kill.

(1608)

20. **estate**, state. 25. **brave it most**, make the most show.

HIS PILGRIMAGE

Give me my scallop-shell of quiet,
My staff of faith to walk upon,
My scrip of joy, immortal diet,
My bottle of salvation,
My gown of glory, hope's true gage; 5
And thus I'll take my pilgrimage.

Blood must be my body's balmer;
No other balm will there be given;
Whilst my soul, like a quiet palmer,
Traveleth toward the land of heaven,

His Pilgrimage. This is a very uneven poem. Notice the belief that heaven is a sort of El Dorado, and the tendency to work out elaborate parallels. **1. scallop-shell.** Pilgrims picked up these shells on the beaches of Palestine and wore them in their hats. They took with them staves carved in symbolic shapes, such as crosses or crooks, and they carried *scrips*, or bags for provisions. **9. palmer**, pilgrim, or wandering religious votary who bore a palm leaf as a sign of having visited the Holy Land.

Over the silver mountains, 11
Where spring the nectar fountains.
There will I kiss
The bowl of bliss,
And drink mine everlasting fill 15
Upon every milken hill.
My soul will be a-dry before;
But, after, it will thirst no more.

Then by that happy, blissful day
More peaceful pilgrims I shall see, 20
That have cast off their rags of clay,
And walk appareled fresh like me.
I'll take them first,
To quench their thirst
And taste of nectar suckets, 25
At those clear wells
Where sweetness dwells,
Drawn up by saints in crystal buckets.

And when our bottles and all we
Are filled with immortality, 30
Then the blessed paths we'll travel,
Strowed with rubies thick as gravel;
Ceilings of diamonds, sapphire floors,
High walls of coral, and pearly bowers.

From thence to heaven's bribeless hall, 35
Where no corrupted voices brawl;
No conscience molten into gold;
No forged accuser bought or sold;
No cause deferred, no vain-spent journey,
For there Christ is the king's attorney,
Who pleads for all, without degrees, 41
And he hath angels but no fees.
And when the grand twelve million jury
Of our sins, with direful fury,
Against our souls black verdicts give, 45
Christ pleads his death; and then we live.

Be Thou my speaker, taintless pleader!
Unblotted lawyer! true proceeder!
Thou giv'st salvation, even for alms,
Not with a bribéd lawyer's palms. 50

And this is mine eternal plea
To Him that made heaven and earth and sea:
That since my flesh must die so soon,
And want a head to dine next noon,
Just at the stroke, when my veins start and spread, 55
Set on my soul an everlasting head!
Then am I ready, like a palmer fit,
To tread those blest paths, which before I writ.

Of death and judgment, heaven and hell,
Who oft doth think, must needs die well.

c. 1603 (1651)

25. **suckets**, sweetmeats. 42. **angels**, a pun, for an angel was a gold coin worth about $3.50.

THE CONCLUSION

Even such is time, that takes in trust
Our youth, our joys, our all we have,
And pays us but with earth and dust;
Who, in the dark and silent grave,
When we have wandered all our ways, 5
Shuts up the story of our days.
But from this earth, this grave, this dust,
My God shall raise me up, I trust.

1618 (1628)

53. **flesh**. Raleigh was in prison from 1603 to 1616, and in danger of being beheaded.

The Conclusion. These lines are said to have been composed the night before Raleigh's execution. They were found in his Bible.

*Notice in Shakespeare's sonnets the perfect union of distinctly English ideas and emotions with the rather artificial Renaissance ideas and literary form. The word pictures are created partly from a vivid appreciation of the beauties of nature, and partly from a keen artistic sense of the beauty of an artificial simile.

Sonnet XII. Cf. this sonnet with "Ubi Sunt Qui Ante Nos Fuerunt?" (page 344), and Sonnet LXXIII (page 366).

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
(1564–1616)

*SONNETS

XII

When I do count the clock that tells the time,
And see the brave day sunk in hideous night;
When I behold the violet past prime,
And sable curls all silvered o'er with white;
When lofty trees I see barren of leaves,
Which erst from heat did canopy the herd, 6

And summer's green all girded up in sheaves
Borne on the bier with white and bristly beard—
Then of thy beauty do I question make,
That thou among the wastes of time must go, 10
Since sweets and beauties do themselves forsake
And die as fast as they see others grow;
And nothing 'gainst Time's scythe can make defense
Save breed, to brave him when he takes thee hence.

XV

When I consider everything that grows
Holds in perfection but a little moment,
That this huge stage presenteth nought but shows
Whereon the stars in secret influence comment;
When I perceive that men as plants increase, 5
Cheeréd and checked even by the self-same sky,
Vaunt in their youthful sap, at height decrease,
And wear their brave state out of memory—
Then the conceit of this inconstant stay
Sets you most rich in youth before my sight, 10
Where wasteful Time debateth with Decay,
To change your day of youth to sullied night;
And all in war with Time for love of you,
As he takes from you, I engraft you new.

XVIII

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate;
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date.
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines, 5
And often is his gold complexion dimmed;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course untrimmed.
But thy eternal summer shall not fade
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest; 10
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou growest.
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this and this gives life to thee.

XXIX

When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone beweep my outcast state
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries
And look upon myself and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope, 5
Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee, and then my state, 10
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

XXX

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,

Sonnet XVIII. 8. **untrimmed**, stripped. 10. **owest**, ownest. 12. **eternal lines.** It was a literary tradition for a poet to imply that he conferred immortality upon those whom he enshrined in his verse.

I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste.
Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow, 5
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
And weep afresh love's long since canceled woe,
And moan the expense of many a vanished sight—
Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,
And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er 10
The sad account of fore-bemoanéd moan,
Which I new pay as if not paid before.
But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
All losses are restored and sorrows end.

XXXIII

Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye,
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy;
Anon permit the basest clouds to ride 5
With ugly rack on his celestial face,
And from the forlorn world his visage hide,
Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace.
Even so my sun one early morn did shine
With all-triumphant splendor on my brow; 10
But out, alack! he was but one hour mine;
The region cloud hath masked him from me now.
Yet him for this my love no whit disdaineth;
Suns of the world may stain when heaven's sun staineth.

Sonnet XXXIII. 6. **rack**, ragged, flying clouds.

LX

Like as the waves make toward the pebbled shore,
So do our minutes hasten to their end;
Each changing place with that which goes before,
In sequent toil all forwards do contend.
Nativity, once in the main of light, 5
Crawls to maturity, wherewith being crowned,
Crooked eclipses 'gainst his glory fight,
And Time that gave doth now his gift confound.
Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth
And delves the parallels in beauty's brow, 10
Feeds on the rarities of nature's truth,
And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow.
And yet to times in hope my verse shall stand,
Praising thy worth, despite his cruel hand.

LXXI

No longer mourn for me when I am dead
Than you shall hear the surly, sullen bell
Give warning to the world that I am fled
From this vile world, with vilest worms to dwell. 4
Nay, if you read this line, remember not
The hand that writ it; for I love you so
That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot
If thinking on me then should make you woe.
Oh, if, I say, you look upon this verse
When I perhaps compounded am with clay, 10
Do not so much as my poor name rehearse,
But let your love even with my life decay,
Lest the wise world should look into your moan
And mock you with me after I am gone.

Sonnet LX. Cf. this sonnet with *The Rubáiyát*, stanzas XCVI-CI (page 517).
Sonnet LXXI. Cf. this with "John Anderson, My Jo, John" (page 443), and *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, XLIII (page 520).

LXXIII

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day 5
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest. 8
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the deathbed whereon it must expire,
Consumed with that which it was nourished by.
This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

CVI

When in the chronicle of wasted time
I see descriptions of the fairest wights,
And beauty making beautiful old rime
In praise of ladies dead and lovely knights,
Then, in the blazon of sweet beauty's best, 5
Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow,
I see their antique pen would have expressed
Even such a beauty as you master now.
So all their praises are but prophecies
Of this our time, all you prefiguring; 10
And, for they looked but with divining eyes,
They had not skill enough your worth to sing;
For we, which now behold these present days,
Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to praise.

Sonnet LXXIII. Cf. "On Growing Old" (page 624). *Sonnet CVI.* Cf. "Ubi Sunt Qui Ante Nos Fuerunt?" (page 344). 2. **wights**, people. 5. **blazon**, proclamation.

CVII

Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic soul
Of the wide world dreaming on things to come,
Can yet the lease of my true love control,
Supposed as forfeit to a confined doom.
The mortal moon hath her eclipse endured 5
And the sad augurs mock their own presage;
Incertainties now crown themselves assured
And peace proclaims olives of endless age.
Now with the drops of this most balmy time
My love looks fresh, and Death to me subscribes, 10
Since, spite of him, I'll live in this poor rime,
While he insults o'er dull and speechless tribes.
And thou in this shalt find thy monument,
When tyrants' crests and tombs of brass are spent.

CIX

Oh, never say that I was false of heart,
Though absence seemed my flame to qualify.
As easy might I from myself depart
As from my soul, which in thy breast doth lie.
That is my home of love; if I have ranged, 5
Like him that travels I return again,
Just to the time, not with the time exchanged,
So that myself bring water for my stain.
Never believe, though in my nature reigned
All frailties that besiege all kinds of blood, 10
That it could so preposterously be stained,
To leave for nothing all thy sum of good;
For nothing this wide universe I call,
Save thou, my rose; in it thou art my all.

Sonnet CVII. 8. **olives.** The olive tree is the symbol of peace. 10. **subscribes**, yields.

CXVI

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove.
Oh, no! it is an ever-fixéd mark 5
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come; 10
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

CXXVIII

How oft, when thou, my music, music play'st,
Upon that blessed wood whose motion sounds
With thy sweet fingers, when thou gently sway'st
The wiry concord that mine ear confounds,
Do I envy those jacks that nimble leap 5
To kiss the tender inward of thy hand,
Whilst my poor lips, which should that harvest reap,
At the wood's boldness by thee blushing stand!
To be so tickled, they would change their state
And situation with those dancing chips,
O'er whom thy fingers walk with gentle gait, 11
Making dead wood more blest than living lips.
Since saucy jacks so happy are in this,
Give them thy fingers, me thy lips to kiss. BEFORE 1598 (1609)

Sonnet CXVI. Cf. *Sonnets from the Portuguese,* VI (page 519).
Sonnet CXXVIII. The poet sees his beloved playing a spinet, the earliest predecessor of the piano, and envies the contact of the keys with the hands of the beloved. 5. **jacks,** keys.

SONGS FROM THE PLAYS

WHEN ICICLES HANG BY THE WALL

FROM LOVE'S LABOR'S LOST

When icicles hang by the wall,
And Dick the shepherd blows his nail,
And Tom bears logs into the hall,
And milk comes frozen home in pail,
When blood is nipped and ways be foul,
Then nightly sings the staring owl, 5
Tu-whit, tu-who! a merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

When all aloud the wind doth blow,
And coughing drowns the parson's saw, 10
And birds sit brooding in the snow,
And Marian's nose looks red and raw,
When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl,
Then nightly sings the staring owl,
Tu-whit, tu-who! a merry note, 15
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

c. 1589 (1598)

WHO IS SILVIA?

FROM TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

Who is Silvia? what is she,
That all our swains commend her?
Holy, fair, and wise is she;
The heaven such grace did lend her
That she might admiréd be. 5

Is she kind as she is fair?
For beauty lives with kindness.
Love doth to her eyes repair
To help him of his blindness,
And, being helped, inhabits there. 10

Then to Silvia let us sing
That Silvia is excelling;
She excels each mortal thing
Upon the dull earth dwelling—
To her let us garlands bring.

c. 1590 (1623)

When Icicles Hang by the Wall. This song is a triumph of lyric beauty in frankest realism. Cf. with Campion's "Winter Nights" (page 371), which gives a more courtly version of the same picture. 8. **keel,** scour. 10. **saw,** moralizing or sermon. 13. **crabs,** crab-apples.

TELL ME, WHERE IS FANCY BRED

From The Merchant of Venice

Tell me, where is fancy bred,
Or in the heart, or in the head?
How begot, how nourishéd?
Reply, reply.

It is engendered in the eyes, 5
With gazing fed; and fancy dies
In the cradle where it lies.
Let us all ring fancy's knell;
I'll begin it—Ding-dong, bell.
Ding, dong, bell.

c. 1596 (1600)

UNDER THE GREENWOOD TREE

From As You Like It

Under the greenwood tree
Who loves to lie with me,
And turn his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat,
Come hither! come hither! come hither!
Here shall he see 6
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

Who doth ambition shun
And loves to live i' the sun, 10
Seeking the food he eats
And pleased with what he gets,
Come hither! come hither! come hither!
Here shall he see
No enemy 15
But winter and rough weather.

c. 1600 (1623)

BLOW, BLOW, THOU WINTER WIND!

From As You Like It

Blow, blow, thou winter wind!
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude;
Thy tooth is not so keen,
Because thou art not seen, 5
Although thy breath be rude.

Heigh ho! sing, heigh ho! unto the green holly;
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly.
Then, heigh ho, the holly!
This life is most jolly. 10

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky!
That dost not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot;
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp 15
As friend remembered not.

Heigh ho! sing, heigh ho! etc.

c. 1600 (1623)

O MISTRESS MINE, WHERE ARE YOU ROAMING?

From Twelfth Night

O Mistress mine, where are you roaming?
Oh, stay and hear; your true love's coming,
That can sing both high and low.
Trip no further, pretty sweeting,
Journeys end in lovers meeting, 5
Every wise man's son doth know.

What is Love? 'tis not hereafter;
Present mirth hath present laughter;
What's to come is still unsure.
In delay there lies no plenty; 10
Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty;
Youth's a stuff will not endure.

c. 1601 (1623)

TAKE, O, TAKE THOSE LIPS AWAY

From Measure for Measure

Take, O, take those lips away
That so sweetly were forsworn;
And those eyes, the break of day,
Lights that do mislead the morn.
But my kisses bring again, 5
Bring again;
Seals of love, but sealed in vain,
Sealed in vain!

c. 1603 (1623)

Tell Me, Where Is Fancy Bred. 1. **fancy**, love.
Blow, Blow, Thou Winter Wind. There is a reminiscent Anglo-Saxon ring to this lyric. It is as bitter as "The Collar" (page 386) and "Invictus" (page 600), but it does not show the same determination to fight back.

HARK, HARK! THE LARK

From Cymbeline

Hark, hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings
  And Phoebus 'gins arise,
His steeds to water at those springs
  On chaliced flowers that lies;
And winking Mary-buds begin 5
  To ope their golden eyes.
With every thing that pretty is,
  My lady sweet, arise!
    Arise, arise! c. 1610 (1623)

FEAR NO MORE THE HEAT O' THE SUN

From Cymbeline

Fear no more the heat o' the sun,
  Nor the furious winter's rages;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
  Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages.
Golden lads and girls all must, 5
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

Fear no more the frown o' the great;
  Thou art past the tyrant's stroke;
Care no more to clothe and eat;
  To thee the reed is as the oak. 10
The scepter, learning, physic must
All follow this, and come to dust.

Fear no more the lightning-flash,
  Nor th' all-dreaded thunder-stone;
Fear not slander, censure rash; 15
  Thou hast finished joy and moan.
All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee, and come to dust.

Hark, Hark! the Lark. 2. **Phoebus**, Apollo, the Greek sun god.

Fear No More the Heat o' th' Sun. A dirge sung over the supposedly dead "Fidele," who is Imogene in disguise. On the whole, English and American literature shows fortitude and resignation to death in such poems as "The Litany" (page 385), "In Time of Pestilence" (page 370), "Death" (page 379), "Prospice" (page 566), "Invictus" (page 600), "Thanatopsis" (page 634), "Crossing the Bar" (page 547), "Requiem" (page 599), and the "1914 Sonnets" (page 620). The dirges and elegies emphasize this. Cf. "Of His Dear Son, Gervase" (page 375), "Departed Friends" (page 406), "The Elegy" (page 416), "The Burial of Sir John Moore" (page 479), "At the Grave of Burns" (page 460), "Adonais" (page 493), "In Memoriam" (page 533), "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington" (page 540), "Matri Dilectissimae" (page 601), and "Pater Filio" (page 605). The hope of immortality appears in "Departed Friends" (page 406), "In Memoriam" (page 533), "Crossing the Bar" (page 547), and "The Choir Invisible" (page 520). 14. **thunder-stone**, thunderbolt. 18. **Consign**, yield.

No exorciser harm thee!
  Nor no witchcraft charm thee! 20
Ghost unlaid forbear thee!
  Nothing ill come near thee!
Quiet consummation have;
And renowned be thy grave!
    c. 1610 (1623)

FULL FATHOM FIVE THY FATHER LIES

From The Tempest

Full fathom five thy father lies.
  Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes;
  Nothing of him that doth fade
But doth suffer a sea change 5
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:
    Ding-dong!
Hark! now I hear them—Ding-dong,
  bell!
    c. 1611 (1623)

WHERE THE BEE SUCKS, THERE SUCK I

From The Tempest

Where the bee sucks, there suck I;
In a cowslip's bell I lie;
There I couch when owls do cry.
On the bat's back I do fly
After summer merrily. 5
Merrily, merrily, shall I live now
Under the blossom that hangs on the
  bough.
    c. 1611 (1623)

Full Fathom Five Thy Father Lies. Ariel, who sings this song and the next, is the fairy spirit who attends the magician Prospero.

THOMAS NASH (1567-1601)

SPRING

Spring, the sweet Spring, is the year's
  pleasant king;
Then blooms each thing, then maids
  dance in a ring;
Cold doth not sting, the pretty birds do
  sing—
  Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!

The palm and may make country houses
gay; 5
Lambs frisk and play, the shepherds
pipe all day;
And we hear aye birds tune this merry
lay—
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!

The fields breathe sweet, the daisies kiss
our feet;
Young lovers meet, old wives a-sunning
sit; 10
In every street these tunes our ears do
greet—
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!
Spring, the sweet Spring! (1600)

IN TIME OF PESTILENCE

Adieu, farewell earth's bliss!
This world uncertain is.
Fond are life's lustful joys;
Death proves them all but toys.
None from his darts can fly; 5
I am sick, I must die—
Lord, have mercy on us!

Rich men, trust not in wealth;
Gold cannot buy you health;
Physic himself must fade; 10
All things to end are made;
The plague full swift goes by;
I am sick, I must die—
Lord, have mercy on us!

Beauty is but a flower 15
Which wrinkles will devour;
Brightness falls from the air;
Queens have died young and fair;
Dust hath closed Helen's eye;
I am sick, I must die— 20
Lord, have mercy on us!

Strength stoops unto the grave;
Worms feed on Hector brave;
Swords may not fight with fate;
Earth still holds ope her gate; 25
Come, come! the bells do cry;
I am sick, I must die—
Lord, have mercy on us!

5. **may**, hawthorn.
In Time of Pestilence, 3. **Fond**, foolish. 19. **Helen**, the mythical queen of Sparta whose beauty caused the Trojan War. 23. **Hector**, a son of King Priam of Troy, and the bravest of the Trojan warriors.

Wit with his wantonness
Tasteth death's bitterness; 30
Hell's executioner
Hath no ears for to hear
What vain art can reply;
I am sick, I must die—
Lord, have mercy on us! 35

Haste therefore each degree
To welcome destiny;
Heaven is our heritage,
Earth but a player's stage.
Mount we unto the sky; 40
I am sick, I must die—
Lord, have mercy on us!
(1600)

THOMAS CAMPION (1540-1619)

INTEGER VITAE

The man of life upright,
Whose guiltless heart is free
From all dishonest deeds,
Or thought of vanity;

The man whose silent days 5
In harmless joys are spent,
Whom hopes cannot delude,
Nor sorrow discontent;

That man needs neither towers
Nor armor for defense, 10
Nor secret vaults to fly
From thunder's violence.

He only can behold
With unaffrighted eyes
The horrors of the deep 15
And terrors of the skies.

Thus, scorning all the cares
That fate or fortune brings,
He makes the heaven his book,
His wisdom heavenly things; 20

Good thoughts his only friends,
His wealth a well-spent age,
The earth his sober inn
And quiet pilgrimage. (1601)

29. **Wit**, etc., the mind with its quickness.
Integer Vitae (Upright of Life). Adapted from *The Odes of Horace*, Book I, Ode XXII.

SIC TRANSIT

Come, cheerful day, part of my life to me;
For while thou view'st me with thy fading light,
Part of my life doth still depart with thee,
And I still onward haste to my last night.
Time's fatal wings do ever forward fly; 5
So every day we live a day we die.

But, O ye nights, ordained for barren rest,
How are my days deprived of life in you,
When heavy sleep my soul hath dispossest,
By feigned death life sweetly to renew! 10
Part of my life in that, you life deny;
So every day we live a day we die.

(1613)

CHERRY-RIPE

There is a garden in her face
Where roses and white lilies blow;
A heavenly paradise is that place,
Wherein all pleasant fruits do flow.
There cherries grow which none may buy 5
Till "Cherry-ripe" themselves do cry.

Those cherries fairly do inclose
Of orient pearl a double row,
Which when her lovely laughter shows,
They look like rosebuds filled with snow; 10
Yet them nor peer nor prince can buy
Till "Cherry-ripe" themselves do cry.

Her eyes like angels watch them still;
Her brows like bended bows do stand,
Threat'ning with piercing frowns to kill
All that attempt with eye or hand 16
Those sacred cherries to come nigh,
Till "Cherry-ripe" themselves do cry.

(c. 1617)

Sic Transit [*Gloria Mundi*], "thus passes the glory of the world." This poem has a distinctly Horatian sentiment, which Petrarch developed in the Renaissance and which spread widely through the lyric poetry of Europe. 3. **still**, ever.
Cherry-ripe. 8. **orient**, rich.

WINTER NIGHTS

Now winter nights enlarge
The number of their hours,
And clouds their storms discharge
Upon the airy towers.
Let now the chimneys blaze 5
And cups o'erflow with wine;
Let well-tuned words amaze
With harmony divine.
Now yellow waxen lights
Shall wait on honey love, 10
While youthful revels, masks, and courtly sights
Sleep's leaden spells remove.

This time doth well dispense
With lover's long discourse;
Much speech hath some defense, 15
Though beauty no remorse.
All do not all things well;
Some measures comely tread,
Some knotted riddles tell,
Some poems smoothly read. 20
The summer hath his joys,
And winter his delights;
Though love and all his pleasures are but toys,
They shorten tedious nights.

(c. 1617)

SIR HENRY WOTTON (1568-1639)

ON THE SUDDEN RESTRAINT OF ROBERT CARR, EARL OF SOMERSET; THEN FALLING FROM FAVOR

Dazzled thus with height of place,
Whilst our hopes our wits beguile,
No man marks the narrow space
'Twixt a prison and a smile!

Then, since Fortune's favors fade, 5
You that in her arms do sleep,
Learn to swim, and not to wade;
For the hearts of kings are deep.

Winter Nights. Adapted from *The Odes of Horace*, Book I, Ode X. Horace and Vergil have had the greatest classical influence upon English lyric poetry. 11. **mask**, a dramatic performance on a mythological or allegorical subject, into which music and dancing were introduced. The actors were often masked.
On the Sudden Restraint. Title. **falling from favor.** Robert Carr was an early favorite of James I. His scandalous conduct caused his ruin. Notice the tendency in seventeenth-century lyric poetry to be epigrammatic.

But if greatness be so blind
As to trust in towers of air, 10
Let it be with goodness lined,
That, at least, the fall be fair.

Then, though darkened, you shall say,
When friends fail and princes frown:
"Virtue is the roughest way, 15
But proves, at night, a bed of down!"

c. 1615 (1651)

THE CHARACTER OF A HAPPY LIFE

How happy is he born and taught
That serveth not another's will;
Whose armor is his honest thought,
And simple truth his utmost skill!

Whose passions not his masters are; 5
Whose soul is still prepared for death,
Untied unto the world by care
Of public fame or private breath;

Who envies none that chance doth raise,
Nor vice; who never understood 10
How deepest wounds are given by praise;
Nor rules of state, but rules of good;

Who hath his life from rumors freed;
Whose conscience is his strong retreat;
Whose state can neither flatterers feed, 15
Nor ruin make oppressors great;

Who God doth late and early pray
More of his grace than gifts to lend;
And entertains the harmless day
With a religious book or friend; 20

—This man is freed from servile bands
Of hope to rise or fear to fall;
Lord of himself, though not of lands,
And having nothing, yet hath all.

c. 1615 (1651)

The Character of a Happy Life. This poem and "Character of the Happy Warrior" (page 463) are the most popular English lyric poems on the subject of how to lead a vigorous, happy life. 6. **still**, ever.

THOMAS DEKKER (c.1575-c.1641)

SWEET CONTENT

Art thou poor, yet hast thou golden slumbers?
O sweet content!
Art thou rich, yet is thy mind perplexed?
O punishment!
Dost thou laugh to see how fools are vexed 5
To add to golden numbers golden numbers?
O sweet content! O sweet, O sweet content!
Work apace, apace, apace, apace,
Honest labor bears a lovely face;
Then hey nonny nonny—hey nonny nonny! 10

Canst drink the waters of the crispéd spring?
O sweet content!
Swim'st thou in wealth, yet sink'st in thine own tears?
O punishment!
Then he that patiently want's burden bears, 15
No burden bears, but is a king, a king!
O sweet content! O sweet, O sweet content!
Work apace, apace, apace, apace,
Honest labor bears a lovely face;
Then hey nonny nonny—hey nonny nonny!

c. 1599 (1603)

SONG

Virtue smiles: cry holiday;
Dimples on her cheeks do dwell.
Virtue frowns: cry welladay;
Her love is heaven, her hate is hell.

Since heaven and hell obey her power, 5
Tremble when her eyes do lower.
Since heaven and hell her power obey,
Where she smiles, cry holiday.

Holiday with joy we cry,
And bend, and bend, and merrily 10
Sing hymns to Virtue's deity:
Sing hymns to Virtue's deity.

(1600)

Sweet Content. From *Patient Grissill*, a comedy. 11. **crispéd**, rippling.
Song. From *Old Fortunatus*, a comedy.

SIR JOHN DAVIES (1569-1626)

MAN

I know my soul hath power to know all things,
Yet is she blind and ignorant in all.
I know I'm one of Nature's little kings,
Yet to the least and vilest things am thrall.
I know my life's a pain and but a span;
I know my sense is mocked with everything;
And, to conclude, I know myself a man—
Which is a proud and yet a wretched thing.

(1599)

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

NOTE

In this century English lyric poetry swept from the preceding period of youthful experimentation and mastery, through the terrific religious and political disturbances of the Civil War, to the conscious maturity of middle age, with a consequent loss of imaginative power and a growing attention to form. Three main lines of development may in general be distinguished. Under the leadership of Ben Jonson, the Cavalier Poets—Herrick, Carew, Lovelace, and Suckling—carried on the traditions of the Renaissance in passionate and imperious love lyrics. The Metaphysical Poets—Donne, Herbert, Crashaw, and Vaughan—broke with this tradition in search of new subjects and images for lyric expression—chiefly philosophical. After the Restoration both tendencies disappeared in the polished court poetry of Cowley, Waller, and Dryden. Meanwhile under the influence of Puritanism arose the group of religious poets headed by Milton, and including Wither and Marvell. The general tendency of lyric poetry toward the end of this century was to turn away from the emotional love poetry of the Cavaliers, and the equally emotional religious poetry of the Puritans, to the less emotional, more intellectual, and more elaborately constructed poems of the Restoration. Individual emotion was finally supplanted by brilliant and impersonal reflections upon life, and the simple lyric forms were replaced by the heroic couplet and the elaborate choral ode.

BEN JONSON (1573-1637)

HYMN TO DIANA

Queen and huntress, chaste and fair,
Now the sun is laid to sleep,
Seated in thy silver chair,
State in wonted manner keep.
Hesperus entreats thy light, 5
Goddess excellently bright.

Earth, let not thy envious shade
Dare itself to interpose;
Cynthia's shining orb was made
Heaven to clear when day did close. 10
Bless us then with wishéd sight,
Goddess excellently bright.

Lay thy bow of pearl apart,
And thy crystal-shining quiver;
Give unto the flying hart 15
Space to breathe, how short soever.
Thou that mak'st a day of night—
Goddess excellently bright. (1601)

TO CELIA

Drink to me only with thine eyes,
And I will pledge with mine;
Or leave a kiss but in the cup
And I'll not look for wine.
The thirst that from the soul doth rise 5
Doth ask a drink divine;
But might I of Jove's nectar sup,
I would not change for thine.

I sent thee late a rosy wreath,
Not so much honoring thee 10
As giving it a hope that there
It could not withered be;
But thou thereon didst only breathe,
And sent'st it back to me;
Since when it grows, and smells, I swear, 15
Not of itself but thee! (1616)

Man. Cf. with "To Althea, from Prison" (page 388), and "Invictus" (page 600).

Hymn to Diana. From *Cynthia's Revels*, a dramatic social satire. Cynthia was another name for Diana. 5. **Hesperus**, the evening star.

To Celia. Here Jonson gives immortality to the stilted phrases of the Hellenistic Greek sophist, Philostratus of Lemnos (170-250 A.D.), as contained in *Imagines*, a series of high-flown, artificial love letters. For this poem see letters 24, 30, 31. Cf. "To Electra" (page 382).

SIMPLEX MUNDITIIS

Still to be neat, still to be drest,
As you were going to a feast;
Still to be powdered, still perfumed—
Lady, it is to be presumed,
Though art's hid causes are not found, 5
All is not sweet, all is not sound.

Give me a look, give me a face
That makes simplicity a grace.
Robes loosely flowing, hair as free,
Such sweet neglect more taketh me 10
Than all th' adulteries of art;
They strike mine eyes, but not my heart. (1616)

TO THE MEMORY OF MY BELOVED, MASTER WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

To draw no envy, Shakespeare, on thy name,
Am I thus ample to thy book and fame;
While I confess thy writings to be such
As neither man, nor muse, can praise too much.
'Tis true, and all men's suffrage. But these ways 5
Were not the paths I meant unto thy praise;
For silliest ignorance on these may light,
Which, when it sounds at best, but echoes right;
Or blind affection, which doth ne'er advance
The truth, but gropes, and urgeth all by chance; 10
Or crafty malice might pretend this praise,
And think to ruin, where it seemed to raise.
These are, as some infamous bawd or whore
Should praise a matron. What could hurt her more?
But thou art proof against them, and, indeed, 15
Above the ill fortune of them, or the need.
I therefore will begin. Soul of the age!
The applause, delight, the wonder of our stage!
My Shakespeare, rise! I will not lodge thee by
Chaucer, or Spenser, or bid Beaumont lie 20
A little further, to make thee a room;
Thou art a monument without a tomb,
And art alive still while thy book doth live
And we have wits to read and praise to give.
That I not mix thee so, my brain excuses, 25
I mean with great, but disproportioned Muses;
For if I thought my judgment were of years,
I should commit thee surely with thy peers,
And tell how far thou didst our Lyly outshine,
Or sporting Kyd, or Marlowe's mighty line. 30
And though thou hadst small Latin and less Greek,
From thence to honor thee, I would not seek
For names; but call forth thundering Æschylus,
Euripides, and Sophocles to us; 34
Pacuvius, Accius, him of Cordova dead,
To life again, to hear thy buskin tread,
And shake a stage; or, when thy socks were on,
Leave thee alone for the comparison
Of all that insolent Greece or haughty Rome
Sent forth, or since did from their ashes come. 40

Simplex Munditiis. "Simple in her adornments," a phrase from *The Odes of Horace*, Book I, Ode V. 1. **Still**, always.

To the Memory of My Beloved Master William Shakespeare. With Jonson the spirit of conscious scholarship enters English poetry. Notice the comparisons he institutes between Shakespeare and authors of other literatures. Each of his poems given here has classical compression of phrase, coupled with simple English lyric beauty.

29-30. **Lyly, Kyd, Marlowe**, early contemporaries of Shakespeare in the drama. Marlowe developed dramatic blank verse. 33-34. **Æschylus, Euripides, Sophocles**, Greek tragic dramatists. See introductory essay on the drama (page II-1). 35. **Pacuvius, Accius, Roman** tragic dramatists, whose works have been lost. **him of Cordova.** Seneca, the Roman philosopher, dramatist, and tutor of Nero, was born in Spain. 36. **buskin**, the thick-soled boot used in Greek tragedy to give height to the actors. 37. **sock**, the thin-soled shoe used in Greek comedy.

Triumph, my Britain, thou hast one to show
To whom all scenes of Europe homage owe.
He was not of an age, but for all time!
And all the Muses still were in their prime,
When, like Apollo, he came forth to warm
Our ears, or like a Mercury to charm! 46
Nature herself was proud of his designs
And joyed to wear the dressing of his lines!
Which were so richly spun, and woven so fit, 49
As, since, she will vouchsafe no other wit.
The merry Greek, tart Aristophanes,
Neat Terence, witty Plautus, now not please,
But antiquated and deserted lie,
As they were not of Nature's family.
Yet must I not give Nature all; thy art,
My gentle Shakespeare, must enjoy a part. 56
For though the poet's matter nature be,
His art doth give the fashion; and, that he
Who casts to write a living line, must sweat
(Such as thine are) and strike the second heat 60
Upon the Muses' anvil; turn the same
(And himself with it) that he thinks to frame,
Or, for the laurel, he may gain a scorn;
For a good poet's made, as well as born.
And such wert thou! Look how the father's face 65
Lives in his issue; even so the race
Of Shakespeare's mind and manners brightly shines
In his well turnéd, and true filéd lines;
In each of which he seems to shake a lance,
As brandished at the eyes of ignorance.
Sweet Swan of Avon! what a sight it were 71
To see thee in our waters yet appear,
And make those flights upon the banks of Thames,
That so did take Eliza, and our James!
But stay, I see thee in the hemisphere 75
Advanced, and made a constellation there!
Shine forth, thou Star of poets, and with rage
Or influence, chide or cheer the drooping stage,
Which, since thy flight from hence, hath mourned like night,
And despairs day, but for thy volume's light. (1623)

45. **Apollo**, the Greek god of music. 46. **Mercury**, the messenger of the gods, famous for his eloquence. 51. **Aristophanes**, a Greek comic dramatist. 52. **Terence . . . Plautus**, Roman comic dramatists. For discussion of them see introductory essay on the drama (page II-3). 59. **casts**, intends; also a pun on casting metal. 74. **Eliza**, Queen Elizabeth (1558–1603). **James**, James I of England (1603–1625).

JOHN FLETCHER (1579-1625)

SLEEP

Come, Sleep, and with thy sweet deceiving
Lock me in delight awhile;
Let some pleasing dreams beguile
All my fancies; that from thence
I may feel an influence 5
All my powers of care bereaving!

Though but a shadow, but a sliding,
Let me know some little joy!
We that suffer long annoy
Are contented with a thought 10
Through an idle fancy wrought;
O let my joys have some abiding!
c. 1606 (1647)

WEEP NO MORE

Weep no more, nor sigh, nor groan,
Sorrow calls no time that's gone.
Violets plucked, the sweetest rain
Makes not fresh nor grow again.
Trim thy locks, look cheerfully; 5
Fate's hid ends eyes cannot see.
Joys as wingéd dreams fly fast;
Why should sadness longer last?
Grief is but a wound to woe;
Gentlest fair, mourn, mourn no moe.
c. 1619 (1647)

SIR JOHN BEAUMONT (1583-1627)

OF HIS DEAR SON, GERVASE

Dear Lord, receive my son, whose winning love
To me was like a friendship, far above

The course of nature or his tender age;
Whose looks could all my bitter griefs assuage.
Let his pure soul, ordained seven years to be 5
In that frail body which was part of me,
Remain my pledge in heaven, as sent to show
How to this port at every step I go.
(1629)

FRANCIS BEAUMONT (c. 1584-1616)

ON THE LIFE OF MAN

Like to the falling of a star,
Or as the flights of eagles are,
Or like the fresh spring's gaudy hue,
Or silver drops of morning dew,
Or like a wind that chafes the flood, 5
Or bubbles which on water stood—
Even such is man, whose borrowed light
Is straight called in and paid to night.
The wind blows out, the bubble dies,
The spring intombed in autumn lies;
The dew's dried up, the star is shot, 11
The flight is past, and man forgot.
(1640)

JOHN WEBSTER (c. 1580-1625)

A DIRGE

Call for the robin-redbreast and the wren,
Since o'er shady groves they hover,
And with leaves and flowers do cover
The friendless bodies of unburied men.
Call unto his funeral dole 5
The ant, the field-mouse, and the mole,
To rear him hillocks that shall keep him warm,
And (when gay tombs are robbed) sustain no harm;
But keep the wolf far thence, that's foe to men,
For with his nails he'll dig them up again. (1612)

A Dirge. 5. **funeral dole**, funeral share of food.

THE SHROUDING OF THE DUCHESS OF MALFI

Hark! Now everything is still,
The screech-owl and the whistler shrill
Call upon our dame aloud,
And bid her quickly don her shroud!

Much you had of land and rent; 5
Your length in clay's now competent.
A long war disturbed your mind;
Here your perfect peace is signed.

Of what is't fools make such vain keeping?
Sin their conception, their birth weeping, 10
Their life a general mist of error,
Their death a hideous storm of terror.

Strew your hair with powders sweet,
Don clean linen, bathe your feet,

And—the foul fiend more to check— 15
A crucifix let bless your neck.

'Tis now full tide 'tween night and day;
End your groan and come away.
(1623)

FRANCIS QUARLES (1592-1644)

RESPICE FINEM

My soul, sit thou a patient looker-on;
Judge not the play before the play is done.
Her plot hath many changes; every day
Speaks a new scene; the last act crowns the play. (1635)

THOMAS HEYWOOD (c. 1575-c. 1650)

MATIN SONG

Pack, clouds, away! and welcome, day!
With night we banish sorrow.
Sweet air, blow soft; mount, lark, aloft,
To give my Love good-morrow!
Wings from the wind to please her mind,
Notes from the lark I'll borrow; 6
Bird, prune thy wing! nightingale, sing!

The Shrouding of the Duchess of Malfi. From *The Duchess of Malfi*, a tragedy. 6. **competent**, sufficient. *Respice Finem*, "consider the end."

To give my Love good-morrow!
To give my Love good-morrow
Notes from them all I'll borrow. 10

Wake from thy nest, robin-redbreast!
Sing, birds, in every furrow!
And from each bill let music shrill
Give my fair Love good-morrow!
Blackbird and thrush in every bush, 15
Stare, linnet, and cocksparrow,
You pretty elves, among yourselves
Sing my fair Love good-morrow!
To give my Love good-morrow!
Sing, birds, in every furrow!

(1608)

JOHN DONNE (1573-1631)

SONG

Go and catch a falling star,
Get with child a mandrake root,
Tell me where all past years are,
Or who cleft the devil's foot;
Teach me to hear mermaids singing, 5
Or to keep off envy's stinging,
And find
What wind
Serves to advance an honest mind.

If thou be'st born to strange sights, 10
Things invisible go see,
Ride ten thousand days and nights
Till Age snow white hairs on thee;
Thou, when thou return'st, wilt tell me
All strange wonders that befell thee, 15
And swear
No where
Lives a woman true and fair.

If thou find'st one, let me know;
Such a pilgrimage were sweet. 20
Yet do not; I would not go,
Though at next door we might meet.
Though she were true when you met her,
And last till you write your letter,
Yet she 25
Will be
False, ere I come, to two or three.

(1633)

16. **Stare**, starling.
Song. 2. **mandrake root.** Mandrake roots were supposed to look like a human body, and were employed in magic practices.

THE INDIFFERENT

I can love both fair and brown;
Her whom abundance melts, and her whom want betrays;
Her who loves loneness best, and her who masks and plays;
Her whom the country formed, and whom the town;
Her who believes, and her who tries; 5
Her who still weeps with spongy eyes,
And her who is dry cork and never cries.
I can love her, and her, and you, and you;
I can love any, so she be not true.

Will no other vice content you? 10
Will it not serve your turn to do as did your mothers?
Or have you all old vices spent and now would find out others?
Or doth a fear that men are true torment you?
O we are not, be not you so;
Let me—and do you—twenty know; 15
Rob me, but bind me not, and let me go.
Must I, who came to travel thorough you,
Grow your fixed subject, because you are true?

Venus heard me sigh this song;
And by love's sweetest part, variety, she swore 20
She heard not this till now; it should be so no more.
She went, examined, and returned ere long,
And said, "Alas! some two or three
Poor heretics in love there be,
Which think to stablish dangerous constancy. 25
But I have told them, 'Since you will be true,
You shall be true to them who're false to you'."

(1633)

THE DREAM

Dear love, for nothing less than thee
Would I have broke this happy dream;
It was a theme

The Indifferent. 6. **still**, ever.
The Dream. A variation of the theme expressed in "Since There's No Help" (page 360) and "Why So Pale and Wan, Fond Lover?" (page 387).

For reason, much too strong for fantasy.
Therefore thou waked'st me wisely; yet
My dream thou brok'st not, but continued'st it. 6
Thou art so true that thoughts of thee suffice
To make dreams truths and fables histories;
Enter these arms, for since thou thought'st it best
Not to dream all my dream, let's act the rest. 10

As lightning, or a taper's light,
Thine eyes, and not thy noise, waked me;
Yet I thought thee—
For thou lov'st truth—an angel, at first sight;
But when I saw thou saw'st my heart,
And knew'st my thoughts beyond an angel's art, 16
When thou knew'st what I dreamt, when thou knew'st when
Excess of joy would wake me, and cam'st then,
I must confess it could not choose but be
Profane to think thee anything but thee. 20

Coming and staying showed thee thee,
But rising makes me doubt that now
Thou art not thou.
That Love is weak where Fear's as strong as he;
'Tis not all spirit pure and brave 25
If mixture it of fear, shame, honor have.
Perchance as torches, which must ready be,
Men light and put out, so thou deal'st with me.
Thou cam'st to kindle, go'st to come; then I
Will dream that hope again, but else would die. (1633)

4. **fantasy**, imagination.

LOVE'S DEITY

I long to talk with some old lover's ghost
Who died before the god of love was born.
I cannot think that he who then loved most
Sunk so low as to love one which did scorn.
But since this god produced a destiny 5
And that vice-nature, custom, lets it be,
I must love her that loves not me.

Sure, they which made him god, meant not so much,
Nor he in his young godhead practiced it.
But when an even flame two hearts did touch, 10
His office was indulgently to fit
Actives to passives. Correspondency
Only his subject was; it cannot be
Love till I love her who loves me.

But every modern god will now extend 15
His vast prerogative as far as Jove.
To rage, to lust, to write to, to commend,
All is the purlieu of the god of love.
O! were we wakened by this tyranny
To ungod this child again, it could not be 20
I should love her who loves not me.

Rebel and atheist too, why murmur I,
As though I felt the worst that love could do?
Love may make me leave loving, or might try
A deeper plague, to make her love me too; 25
Which, since she loves before, I'm loath to see.
Falsehood is worse than hate; and that must be,
If she whom I love, should love me. (1633)

Love's Deity. Cf. "Memory" (page 380), "A Doubt of Martyrdom" (page 387), "Ah, Sunflower" (page 434), "Love's Secret" (page 434), and "Remembrance" (page 625).

THE FUNERAL

Whoever comes to shroud me, do not harm
Nor question much
That subtle wreath of hair about mine arm;
The mystery, the sign you must not touch,
For 'tis my outward soul, 5
Viceroy to that which, unto heaven being gone,
Will leave this to control
And keep these limbs, her provinces, from dissolution.

For if the sinewy thread my brain lets fall
Through every part 10
Can tie those parts, and make me one of all,
Those hairs, which upward grew, and strength and art
Have from a better brain,
Can better do't; except she meant that I
By this should know my pain, 15
As prisoners then are manacled, when they're condemned to die.

Whate'er she meant by't, bury it with me,
For since I am
Love's martyr, it might breed idolatry
If into other hands these reliques came.
As 'twas humility 21
T'afford to it all that a soul can do,
So 'tis some bravery
That, since you would have none of me, I bury some of you. (1633)

DEATH

Death, be not proud, though some have calléd thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death; nor yet canst thou kill me.
From Rest and Sleep, which but thy picture be, 5
Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow;
And soonest our best men with thee do go—
Rest of their bones and souls' delivery!
Thou'rt slave to Fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell; 10
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well
And better than thy stroke. Why swell'st thou then?
One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
And Death shall be no more. Death, thou shalt die! (1633)

The Funeral. 3. **wreath of hair.** It is said that when Swift died, those who prepared him for burial found in a pouch about his neck an envelope on which was written "Only a woman's hair." Within was a lock of the hair of Esther Johnson, his Stella.

A HYMN TO GOD THE FATHER

Wilt Thou forgive that sin where I begun,
Which was my sin, though it were done before?
Wilt Thou forgive that sin through which I run,
And do run still, though still I do deplore?
When Thou hast done, Thou hast not done; 5
For I have more.

Wilt Thou forgive that sin which I have won
Others to sin, and made my sins their door?
Wilt Thou forgive that sin which I did shun
A year or two, but wallowed in a score? 10
When Thou hast done, Thou hast not done;
For I have more.

I have a sin of fear, that when I've spun
My last thread, I shall perish on the shore;
But swear by Thyself that at my death Thy Son 15
Shall shine as He shines now and heretofore;
And having done that, Thou hast done;
I fear no more. (1633)

WILLIAM BROWNE (c.1588-c.1643)

MEMORY

So shuts the marigold her leaves
  At the departure of the sun;
So from the honeysuckle sheaves
  The bee goes when the day is done;
So sits the turtle when she is but one, 5
And so all woe, as I since she is gone.

To some few birds kind Nature hath
  Made all the summer as one day,
Which once enjoyed, cold winter's wrath
  As night they sleeping pass away. 10
Those happy creatures are, that know not yet
The pain to be deprived or to forget.

I oft have heard men say there be
  Some that with confidence profess
The helpful art of memory. 15
  But could they teach forgetfulness,
I'd learn; and try what further art could do
To make me love her and forget her, too.
AFTER 1616 (1852)

EPITAPH : ON THE COUNTESS DOWAGER OF PEMBROKE

Underneath this sable hearse
Lies the subject of all verse:
Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother.
Death, ere thou hast slain another
Fair and learned and good as she, 5
Time shall throw a dart at thee. (1660)

JAMES SHIRLEY (1596-1666)

DEATH THE LEVELER

The glories of our blood and state
  Are shadows, not substantial things;
There is no armor against Fate;
  Death lays his icy hand on kings.
    Scepter and crown 5
    Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.

Some men with swords may reap the field,
  And plant fresh laurels where they kill. 10
But their strong nerves at last must yield;
  They tame but one another still.
    Early or late
    They stoop to Fate,
And must give up their murmuring breath 15
When they, pale captives, creep to death.

The garlands wither on your brow;
  Then boast no more your mighty deeds!
Upon Death's purple altar now
  See where the victor-victim bleeds. 20
    Your heads must come
    To the cold tomb;
Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet and blossom in their dust.
c. 1640 (1659)

Memory. 5. **turtle**, turtle-dove, the bird of love.
Death the Leveler. Cf. "The Elegy" (page 416).

SIR WILLIAM DAVENANT (1606-1668)

AUBADE

The lark now leaves his wat'ry nest,
  And climbing shakes his dewy wings.
He takes this window for the east,
  And to implore your light he sings—
Awake, awake! the morn will never rise
Till she can dress her beauty at your eyes. 6

The merchant bows unto the seaman's star;
  The plowman from the sun his season takes;
But still the lover wonders what they are
  Who look for day before his mistress wakes. 10
Awake, awake! break through your veils of lawn!
Then draw your curtains, and begin the dawn! (1672)

Aubade. This type of French morning love-song is not usual in English. See, however, "Hark, Hark! the Lark" (page 369), "Matin Song" (page 376), and "Corinna's Going a-Maying" (page 381).

THOMAS CAREW (c.1598-c.1639)

SONG

Ask me no more where Jove bestows,
When June is past, the fading rose;
For in your beauty's orient deep
These flowers, as in their causes, sleep.

Ask me no more whither do stray 5
The golden atoms of the day;
For in pure love heaven did prepare
Those powders to enrich your hair.

Ask me no more whither doth haste
The nightingale when May is past; 10
For in your sweet, dividing throat
She winters and keeps warm her note.

Ask me no more where those stars 'light
That downwards fall in dead of night;
For in your eyes they sit, and there 15
Fixéd become as in their sphere.

Ask me no more if east or west
The phoenix builds her spicy nest;
For unto you at last she flies,
And in your fragrant bosom dies.

(1640)

THE UNFADING BEAUTY

He that loves a rosy cheek,
Or a coral lip admires,
Or from star-like eyes doth seek
Fuel to maintain his fires—
As old Time makes these decay, 5
So his flames must waste away.

But a smooth and steadfast mind,
Gentle thoughts and calm desires,
Hearts with equal love combined,
Kindle never-dying fires. 10
Where these are not, I despise
Lovely cheeks or lips or eyes.

(1640)

Song. The idea and imagery of this poem are Renaissance. Cf. "A Meditation for His Mistress" (page 383) and "Wishes to His Supposed Mistress" (page 388). 18. **phoenix**, a mythical Egyptian bird which lived five hundred years, then entombed itself in a spicy nest, which burned up. From its ashes rose the new phoenix.
The Unfading Beauty. Cf. "Believe Me, If All Those Endearing Young Charms" (page 479).

ROBERT HERRICK (1591-1674)

CORINNA'S GOING A-MAYING

Get up, get up for shame! The blooming morn
Upon her wings presents the god unshorn.
See how Aurora throws her fair,
Fresh-quilted colors through the air.
Get up, sweet slug-a-bed, and see 5
The dew bespangling herb and tree!
Each flower has wept and bowed toward the east
Above an hour since, yet you not drest;
Nay! not so much as out of bed? 9
When all the birds have matins said
And sung their thankful hymns, 'tis sin,
Nay, profanation, to keep in,
Whereas a thousand virgins on this day
Spring sooner than the lark, to fetch in May.

Rise and put on your foliage, and be seen
To come forth, like the springtime, fresh and green, 16
And sweet as Flora. Take no care
For jewels for your gown or hair.
Fear not; the leaves will strew
Gems in abundance upon you. 20
Besides, the childhood of the day has kept
Against you come, some orient pearls unwept.
Come, and receive them while the light
Hangs on the dew-locks of the night;
And Titan on the eastern hill 25
Retires himself, or else stands still
Till you come forth! Wash, dress, be brief in praying;
Few beads are best when once we go a-Maying.

Come, my Corinna, come; and coming, mark
How each field turns a street, each street a park, 30
Made green and trimmed with trees! see how

Corinna's Going a-Maying. A May morning song of the boys and girls who on the first of May went to the meadows to gather flowers as the survival of an ancient spring festival. The latter part of the poem is quite Horatian. Cf. "May Is Back" (page 628). 2. **the god unshorn**, the sun, whose rays were supposed to be his flowing hair. 5. **slug-a-bed**, sluggard. 17. **Flora**, goddess of flowers. 25. **Titan**, the sun god. 28. **Few beads**, etc., i.e., since each bead on a rosary represents a prayer.

Devotion gives each house a bough
Or branch! each porch, each door, ere this,
An ark, a tabernacle is,
Made up of whitethorn neatly interwove, 35
As if here were those cooler shades of love.
Can such delights be in the street
And open fields, and we not see't?
Come, we'll abroad; and let's obey
The proclamation made for May, 40
And sin no more, as we have done, by staying;
But, my Corinna, come, let's go a-Maying.

There's not a budding boy or girl this day
But is got up and gone to bring in May.
A deal of youth ere this is come 45
Back, and with whitethorn laden home.
Some have dispatched their cakes and cream,
Before that we have left to dream;
And some have wept and wooed, and plighted troth,
And chose their priest, ere we can cast off sloth. 50
Many a green-gown has been given,
Many a kiss, both odd and even;
Many a glance, too, has been sent
From out the eye, love's firmament;
Many a jest told of the keys betraying
This night, and locks picked; yet we're not a-Maying! 56

Come, let us go, while we are in our prime,
And take the harmless folly of the time!
We shall grow old apace, and die
Before we know our liberty. 60
Our life is short, and our days run
As fast away as does the sun.
And, as a vapor or a drop of rain,
Once lost, can ne'er be found again,
So when or you or I are made 65
A fable, song, or fleeting shade,
All love, all liking, all delight
Lies drowned with us in endless night.
Then, while time serves, and we are but decaying,
Come, my Corinna, come, let's go a-Maying. (1648)

51. **green-gown**, grass-stained dress.

THE NIGHT-PIECE, TO JULIA

Her eyes the glow-worm lend thee;
The shooting stars attend thee;
And the elves also,
Whose little eyes glow
Like the sparks of fire, befriend thee. 5

No Will-o'-the-wisp mislight thee,
Nor snake or slow-worm bite thee;
But on, on thy way
Not making a stay,
Since ghost there's none to affright thee. 10

Let not the dark thee cumber;
What though the moon does slumber?
The stars of the night
Will lend thee their light
Like tapers clear without number. 15

Then, Julia, let me woo thee,
Thus, thus to come unto me;
And when I shall meet
Thy silv'ry feet,
My soul I'll pour into thee.

(1648)

TO ELECTRA

I dare not ask a kiss,
I dare not beg a smile,
Lest having that, or this,
I might grow proud the while.

No, no, the utmost share 5
Of my desire shall be
Only to kiss that air
That lately kisséd thee.

(1648)

CHERRY-RIPE

Cherry-ripe, ripe, ripe, I cry,
Full and fair ones; come and buy.
If so be you ask me where
They do grow, I answer: There
Where my Julia's lips do smile; 5
There's the land, or cherry-isle,
Whose plantations fully show
All the year where cherries grow.

(1648)

A MEDITATION FOR HIS MISTRESS

You are a tulip seen today,
But, dearest, of so short a stay
That where you grew scarce man can
say.

You are a lovely July-flower,
Yet one rude wind or ruffling shower 5
Will force you hence, and in an hour.

You are a sparkling rose i' th' bud,
Yet lost ere that chaste flesh and blood
Can show where you or grew or stood.

You are a full-spread, fair-set vine, 10
And can with tendrils love entwine,
Yet dried ere you distill your wine.

You are like balm encloséd well
In amber or some crystal shell,
Yet lost ere you transfuse your smell. 15

You are a dainty violet,
Yet withered ere you can be set
Within the virgin's coronet.

You are the queen all flowers among;
But die you must, fair maid, ere long, 20
As he, the maker of this song.

(1648)

TO ANTHEA, WHO MAY COMMAND HIM ANYTHING

Bid me to live, and I will live
Thy protestant to be;
Or bid me love, and I will give
A loving heart to thee.

A heart as soft, a heart as kind, 5
A heart as sound and free
As in the whole world thou canst find,
That heart I'll give to thee.

Bid that heart stay, and it will stay
To honor thy decree; 10
Or bid it languish quite away,
And 't shall do so for thee.

Bid me to weep, and I will weep
While I have eyes to see;
And, having none, yet will I keep 15
A heart to weep for thee.

Bid me despair, and I'll despair
Under that cypress-tree;
Or bid me die, and I will dare
E'en death to die for thee. 20

Thou art my life, my love, my heart,
The very eyes of me;
And hast command of every part
To live and die for thee.

(1648)

To Anthea. 2. **protestant,** ardent follower.

TO DAFFODILS

Fair daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon;
As yet the early-rising sun
Has not attained his noon.
Stay, stay 5
Until the hasting day
Has run
But to the evensong;
And, having prayed together, we
Will go with you along. 10

We have short time to stay, as you,
We have as short a spring;
As quick a growth to meet decay,
As you, or anything.
We die 15
As your hours do, and dry
Away
Like to the summer's rain;
Or as the pearls of morning's dew,
Ne'er to be found again.

(1648)

TO VIOLETS

Welcome, maids of honor!
You do bring
In the spring,
And wait upon her.

She has virgins many, 5
Fresh and fair;
Yet you are
More sweet than any.

You're the maiden posies,
And so graced 10
To be placed
'Fore damask roses.

Yet, though thus respected,
By-and-by
Ye do lie, 15
Poor girls, neglected.
(1648)

TO THE VIRGINS, TO MAKE MUCH OF TIME

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
Old Time is still a-flying,
And this same flower that smiles today
Tomorrow will be dying.

The glorious lamp of heaven, the sun, 5
The higher he's a-getting,
The sooner will his race be run,
And nearer he's to setting.

That age is best which is the first,
When youth and blood are warmer;
But being spent, the worse, and worst 11
Times still succeed the former.

Then be not coy, but use your time,
And while ye may, go marry;
For having lost but once your prime, 15
You may forever tarry. (1648)

A THANKSGIVING TO GOD FOR HIS HOUSE

Lord, thou hast given me a cell
Wherein to dwell,
A little house, whose humble roof
Is weather-proof,
Under the spars of which I lie 5
Both soft and dry;
Where thou, my chamber for to ward,
Hast set a guard
Of harmless thoughts, to watch and keep
Me while I sleep. 10
Low is my porch, as is my fate,
Both void of state;
And yet the threshold of my door
Is worn by th' poor,
Who thither come and freely get 15
Good words or meat.
Like as my parlor, so my hall
And kitchen 's small;
A little buttery, and therein
A little bin, 20
Which keeps my little loaf of bread
Unchipped, unflead;
Some little sticks of thorn or brier
Make me a fire,
Close by whose living coal I sit, 25
And glow like it.
Lord, I confess, too, when I dine,
The pulse is thine,
And all those other bits that be
There placed by thee; 30
The worts, the purslain, and the mess
Of watercress,
Which of thy kindness thou hast sent;
And my content
Makes those, and my beloved beet, 35
To be more sweet.
'Tis thou that crown'st my glittering hearth
With guiltless mirth,
And giv'st me wassail bowls to drink,
Spiced to the brink. 40
Lord, 'tis thy plenty-dropping hand
That soils my land,
And giv'st me, for my bushel sown,
Twice ten for one;
Thou mak'st my teeming hen to lay 45
Her egg each day;
Besides my healthful ewes to bear
Me twins each year;
The while the conduits of my kine
Run cream, for wine. 50
All these, and better thou dost send
Me, to this end,
That I should render, for my part,
A thankful heart,
Which, fired with incense, I resign, 55
As wholly thine;
But the acceptance, that must be,
My Christ, by thee. (1648)

A CHILD'S GRACE

Here, a little child, I stand
Heaving up my either hand;
Cold as paddocks though they be,
Here I lift them up to Thee,
For a benison to fall 5
On our meat and on us all. Amen.
(1648)

22. **unflead**, unflayed, uncut. 39. **wassail**, convivial. *A Child's Grace*. 3. **paddock**, frog, toad.

LITANY TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

In the hour of my distress,
When temptations me oppress,
And when I my sins confess,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When I lie within my bed, 5
Sick in heart and sick in head,
And with doubts discomforted,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the house doth sigh and weep,
And the world is drowned in sleep, 10
Yet mine eyes the watch do keep,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the passing bell doth toll,
And the Furies in a shoal
Come to fright a parting soul, 15
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the tapers now burn blue,
And the comforters are few,
And that number more than true,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me! 20

When the priest his last hath prayed,
And I nod to what is said,
'Cause my speech is now decayed,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When, God knows, I'm tossed about 25
Either with despair or doubt;
Yet before the glass be out,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the tempter me pursu'th
With the sins of all my youth, 30
And half damns me with untruth,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the flames and hellish cries
Fright mine ears and fright mine eyes,
And all terrors me surprise, 35
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the Judgment is revealed,
And that opened which was sealed,
When to Thee I have appealed,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me! (1648)

14. **Furies,** Greek goddesses of vengeance.

GEORGE HERBERT (1593-1633)

VIRTUE

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright!
The bridal of the earth and sky—
The dew shall weep thy fall tonight;
For thou must die.

Sweet rose, whose hue angry and brave
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye, 6
Thy root is ever in its grave,
And thou must die.

Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,
A box where sweets compacted lie, 10
My music shows ye have your closes,
And all must die.

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
Like seasoned timber, never gives;
But though the whole world turn to coal,
Then chiefly lives. (1633)

THE PULLEY

When God at first made Man,
Having a glass of blessings standing by—
"Let us," said he, "pour on him all we can;
Let the world's riches, which dispersèd lie,
Contract into a span." 5

So strength first made a way;
Then beauty flowed, then wisdom, honor, pleasure.
When almost all was out, God made a stay,
Perceiving that, alone of all his treasure,
Rest in the bottom lay. 10

"For if I should," said he,
"Bestow this jewel also on my creature,
He would adore my gifts instead of me,
And rest in nature, not the God of nature;
So both should losers be. 15

The Pulley. This lyric is a typical example of metaphysical poetry.

"Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlessness;
Let him be rich and weary, that at least,
If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
May toss him to my breast."

(1633)

THE COLLAR

I struck the board, and cried, "No more;
I will abroad!
What! shall I ever sigh and pine?
My lines and life are free; free as the road,
Loose as the wind, as large as store. 5
Shall I be still in suit?
Have I no harvest but a thorn
To let me blood, and not restore
What I have lost with cordial fruit?
Sure there was wine 10
Before my sighs did dry it; there was corn
Before my tears did drown it;
Is the year only lost to me?
Have I no bays to crown it,
No flowers, no garlands gay? all blasted,
All wasted? 16
Not so, my heart; but there is fruit,
And thou hast hands.
Recover all thy sigh-blown age
On double pleasures; leave thy cold dispute 20
Of what is fit and not; forsake thy cage,
Thy rope of sands
Which petty thoughts have made; and made to thee
Good cable, to enforce and draw,
And be thy law, 25
While thou didst wink and wouldst not see.
Away! take heed;
I will abroad.
Call in thy death's-head there; tie up thy fears.
He that forbears 30
To suit and serve his need
Deserves his load."

The Collar. This poem and the one entitled "Love" are among the first of an important series of poems depicting the rebellion of the soul and its ultimate subjugation to the will of God. Cf. the sonnet "On His Blindness" (page 401), "Lead, Kindly Light" (page 585), "The Buried Life" (page 580), and "The Hound of Heaven" (page 591). 6. **suit**, service.

But as I raved, and grew more fierce and wild
At every word,
Methought I heard one calling, "Child"; 35
And I replied, "My Lord."

(1633)

LOVE

Love bade me welcome; yet my soul drew back,
Guilty of dust and sin.
But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack
From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning, 5
If I lacked anything.

"A guest," I answered, "worthy to be here."
Love said, "You shall be he."
"I, the unkind, ungrateful? Ah, my dear,
I cannot look on thee!" 10
Love took my hand and smiling did reply,
"Who made the eyes but I?"

"Truth, Lord; but I have marred them. Let my shame
Go where it doth deserve."
"And know you not," says Love, "who bore the blame?" 15
"My dear, then I will serve."
"You must sit down," says Love, "and taste my meat."
So I did sit and eat.

(1633)

THE WORLD

Love built a stately house, where Fortune came;
And spinning fancies, she was heard to say
That her fine cobwebs did support the frame,
Whereas they were supported by the same;
But Wisdom quickly swept them all away. 5

Then Pleasure came, who, liking not the fashion,
Began to make balconies, terraces,
Till she had weakened all by alteration;
But reverend laws, and many a proclamation,
Reformed all at length with menaces. 10

Then entered Sin, and with that sycamore
Whose leaves first sheltered man from drought and dew,
Working and winding slily evermore,
The inward walls and summers cleft and tore;
But Grace shored these, and cut that as it grew. 15

Then Sin combined with Death in a firm band
To raze the building to the very floor:
Which they effected, none could them withstand;
But Love and Grace took Glory by the hand,
And built a braver palace than before. (1633)

SIR JOHN SUCKLING (1609-1642)

A DOUBT OF MARTYRDOM

O for some honest lover's ghost,
Some kind unbodied post
Sent from the shades below!
I strangely long to know
Whether the noble chaplets wear, 5
Those that their mistress' scorn did bear
Or those that were used kindly.

For whatsoe'er they tell us here
To make those sufferings dear,
'Twill there, I fear, be found 10
That to the being crowned
T' have loved alone will not suffice,
Unless we also have been wise
And have our loves enjoyed.

What posture can we think him in 15
That, here unloved, again
Departs, and 's thither gone
Where each sits by his own?
Or how can that Elysium be
Where I my mistress still must see 20
Circled in other's arms?

For there the judges all are just,
And Sophonisba must
Be his whom she held dear,
Not his who loved her here. 25
The sweet Philoclea, since she died,
Lies by her Pirocles his side,
Not by Amphialus.

Some bays, perchance, or myrtle bough
For difference crowns the brow 30
Of those kind souls that were
The noble martyrs here;
And if that be the only odds
(As who can tell?), ye kinder gods,
Give me the woman here! (1639)

WHY SO PALE AND WAN, FOND LOVER?

Why so pale and wan, fond lover?
Prithee, why so pale?
Will, when looking well can't move her,
Looking ill prevail?
Prithee, why so pale? 5

Why so dull and mute, young sinner?
Prithee, why so mute?
Will, when speaking well can't win her,
Saying nothing do 't?
Prithee, why so mute? 10

Quit, quit for shame! This will not move;
This cannot take her.
If of herself she will not love,
Nothing can make her.
The devil take her! (1639)

THE CONSTANT LOVER

Out upon it, I have loved
Three whole days together!
And am like to love three more,
If it prove fair weather.

The World. 11. **sycamore**, believed to be the original tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden. 14. **summers**, floor timbers.

A Doubt of Martyrdom. 23-28. **Sophonisba**, etc., characters in Sidney's *Arcadia*. 27. **Pirocles his**, Pirocles's.

Why So Pale and Wan. 1. **fond**, foolish.

Time shall molt away his wings 5
Ere he shall discover
In the whole wide world again
Such a constant lover.

But the spite on't is, no praise
Is due at all to me; 10
Love with me had made no stays,
Had it any been but she.

Had it any been but she,
And that very face,
There had been at least ere this 15
A dozen dozen in her place.

(1639)

RICHARD LOVELACE (1618-1658)

TO LUCASTA, GOING TO THE WARS

Tell me not, Sweet, I am unkind,
That from the nunnery
Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind
To war and arms I fly.

True, a new mistress now I chase, 5
The first foe in the field;
And with a stronger faith embrace
A sword, a horse, a shield.

Yet this inconstancy is such
As thou too shalt adore; 10
I could not love thee, Dear, so much,
Loved I not honor more.

(1649)

TO ALTHEA, FROM PRISON

When Love with unconfinéd wings
Hovers within my gates,
And my divine Althea brings
To whisper at the grates;
When I lie tangled in her hair 5
And fettered to her eye,
The birds that wanton in the air
Know no such liberty.

When flowing cups run swiftly round
With no allaying Thames, 10
Our careless heads with roses bound,
Our hearts with loyal flames;
When thirsty grief in wine we steep,
When healths and drafts go free—
Fishes that tipple in the deep 15
Know no such liberty.

When, like committed linnets, I
With shriller throat shall sing
The sweetness, mercy, majesty,
And glories of my King; 20
When I shall voice aloud how good
He is, how great should be,
Enlargéd winds, that curl the flood,
Know no such liberty.

Stone walls do not a prison make, 25
Nor iron bars a cage;
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for an hermitage;
If I have freedom in my love
And in my soul am free, 30
Angels alone, that soar above,
Enjoy such liberty.

(1649)

RICHARD CRASHAW (c. 1613-1649)

WISHES TO HIS SUPPOSED MISTRESS

Whoe'er she be—
That not impossible She
That shall command my heart and me;

Where'er she lie,
Locked up from mortal eye 5
In shady leaves of destiny;

Till that ripe birth
Of studied Fate stand forth,
And teach her fair steps to our earth;

Till that divine 10
Idea take a shrine
Of crystal flesh, through which to shine—

Meet you her, my Wishes,
Bespeak her to my blisses,
And be ye called my absent kisses. 15

I wish her Beauty,
That owes not all its duty
To gaudy tire, or glist'ring shoe-tie;

Wishes to His Supposed Mistress. 18. **tire**, attire.

Something more than
Taffeta or tissue can, 20
Or rampant feather, or rich fan.

A face, that's best
By its own beauty drest,
And can alone commend the rest.

A face, made up 25
Out of no other shop
Than what Nature's white hand sets ope.

A cheek, where youth
And blood, with pen of truth,
Write what the reader sweetly ru'th. 30

A cheek, where grows
More than a morning rose,
Which to no box his being owes.

Lips, where all day
A lover's kiss may play, 35
Yet carry nothing thence away.

Looks, that oppress
Their richest tires, but dress
And clothe their simplest nakedness.

Eyes, that displace 40
The neighbor diamond, and outface
That sunshine by their own sweet grace.

Tresses, that wear
Jewels but to declare
How much themselves more precious
are; 45

Whose native ray
Can tame the wanton day
Of gems that in their bright shades
play.

Each ruby there,
Or pearl that dare appear, 50
Be its own blush, be its own tear.

A well-tamed heart,
For whose more noble smart
Love may be long choosing a dart.

Eyes, that bestow 55
Full quivers on love's bow,
Yet pay less arrows than they owe.

30. **ru'th**, suffers pangs of love for

Smiles, that can warm
The blood, yet teach a charm,
That chastity shall take no harm. 60

Blushes, that bin
The burnish of no sin,
Nor flames of aught too hot within.

Joys, that confess
Virtue their mistress, 65
And have no other head to dress.

Fears, fond and slight
As the coy bride's, when night
First does the longing lover right.

Days, that need borrow 70
No part of their good-morrow
From a forespent night of sorrow.

Days, that in spite
Of darkness, by the light
Of a clear mind, are day all night. 75

Nights, sweet as they,
Made short by lovers' play,
Yet long by th' absence of the day.

Life, that dares send
A challenge to his end, 80
And when it comes, say, "Welcome,
friend!"

Sydneian showers
Of sweet discourse, whose powers
Can crown old Winter's head with
flowers.

Soft silken hours, 85
Open suns, shady bowers;
'Bove all, nothing within that lowers.

Whate'er delight
Can make Day's forehead bright,
Or give down to the wings of Night. 90

I wish her store
Of worth may leave her poor
Of wishes; and I wish—no more.

Now, if Time knows
That Her, whose radiant brows 95
Weave them a garland of my vows;

61. **bin**, are. 82. **Sydneian**, referring to Sidney's *Arcadia*, a prose pastoral.

Her, whose just bays
My future hopes can raise,
A trophy to her present praise;

Her, that dares be 100
What these lines wish to see;
I seek no further, it is She.

'Tis She, and here,
Lo! I unclothe and clear
My Wishes' cloudy character. 105

May she enjoy it
Whose merit dare apply it,
But modesty dares still deny it!

Such worth as this is
Shall fix my flying Wishes, 110
And determine them to kisses.

Let her full glory,
My fancies, fly before ye;
Be ye my fictions—but her story.

(1648)

From THE FLAMING HEART

UPON THE BOOK AND PICTURE OF THE SERAPHICAL SAINT TERESA

[CONCLUSION]

O thou undaunted daughter of desires!
By all thy dower of lights and fires;
By all the eagle in thee, all the dove;
By all thy lives and deaths of love;
By thy large drafts of intellectual day,
And by thy thirsts of love more large than they; 6
By all thy brim-filled bowls of fierce desire,
By thy last morning's draft of liquid fire;
By the full kingdom of that final kiss
That seized thy parting soul, and sealed thee His; 10
By all the heaven thou hast in Him
(Fair sister of the seraphim!);
By all of Him we have in thee;
Leave nothing of myself in me.
Let me so read thy life that I 15
Unto all life of mine may die! (1652)

From The Flaming Heart. Saint Teresa, a Spanish nun of the sixteenth century, was one of the world's great mystical writers.

JOHN MILTON (1608-1674)

L'ALLEGRO

Hence, loathéd Melancholy,
Of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born
In Stygian cave forlorn
'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights unholy!
Find out some uncouth cell, 5
Where brooding Darkness spreads his jealous wings,
And the night-raven sings;
There, under ebon shades and low-browed rocks,
As ragged as thy locks, 9
In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell.
But come, thou Goddess fair and free,
In heaven yclept Euphrosyne,
And by men heart-easing Mirth,
Whom lovely Venus, at a birth,
With two sister Graces more, 15
To ivy-crownéd Bacchus bore;
Or whether—as some sager sing—
The frolic wind that breathes the spring,
Zephyr, with Aurora playing,
As he met her once a-Maying, 20
There, on beds of violets blue,
And fresh-blown roses washed in dew,
Filled her with thee, a daughter fair,
So buxom, blithe, and debonair.
Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee 25
Jest and youthful Jollity,
Quips and cranks and wanton wiles,
Nods and becks and wreathéd smiles,
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek; 30
Sport that wrinkled Care derides,
And Laughter holding both his sides.
Come, and trip it, as you go,
On the light, fantastic toe;

L'Allegro. See headnote on Milton (page 72). Milton's *Minor Poems* show how closely he was in touch with poetry as practiced by the followers of Ben Jonson. In "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" the poet contrasts the desirable life as it appears to a lighthearted and to a contemplative man. 2. **Cerberus**, the three-headed dog which guarded the entrance to the classical hell. 3. **Stygian**, of the River Styx which flowed through the classical hell. 5. **uncouth**, unknown. 8. **ebon**, black. 10. **Cimmerian.** The classical idea of the world was a flat plain surrounded by the ocean. Beyond lay Cimmeria, the land of darkness. 12. **yclept Euphrosyne**, called the Amiable-minded. 24. **buxom**, graceful. 27. **Quips**, witty sayings. **cranks**, amusing turns of speech. 28. **becks**, beckonings by head or hand. 29. **Hebe**, the cup-bearer of the Greek gods.

And in thy right hand lead with thee 35
The mountain-nymph, sweet Liberty;
And, if I give thee honor due,
Mirth, admit me of thy crew,
To live with her, and live with thee,
In unreprovéd pleasures free: 40
To hear the lark begin his flight,
And, singing, startle the dull night,
From his watch-tower in the skies,
Till the dappled dawn doth rise;
Then to come, in spite of sorrow, 45
And at my window bid good-morrow,
Through the sweet-brier or the vine
Or the twisted eglantine;
While the cock, with lively din,
Scatters the rear of darkness thin, 50
And to the stack, or the barn-door,
Stoutly struts his dames before;
Oft listening how the hounds and horn
Cheerly rouse the slumbering morn,
From the side of some hoar hill, 55
Through the high wood echoing shrill;
Sometime walking, not unseen,
By hedgerow elms, on hillocks green,
Right against the eastern gate,
Where the great Sun begins his state, 60
Robed in flames and amber light,
The clouds in thousand liveries dight;
While the plowman, near at hand,
Whistles o'er the furrowed land,
And the milkmaid singeth blithe, 65
And the mower whets his scythe,
And every shepherd tells his tale
Under the hawthorn in the dale.
Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures,
Whilst the landskip round it measures: 70
Russet lawns, and fallows gray,
Where the nibbling flocks do stray;
Mountains on whose barren breast
The laboring clouds do often rest;
Meadows trim, with daisies pied; 75
Shallow brooks and rivers wide;
Towers and battlements it sees
Bosomed high in tufted trees,
Where perhaps some beauty lies,
The cynosure of neighboring eyes. 80
Hard by, a cottage chimney smokes
From betwixt two aged oaks,

62. **dight**, clad. 67. **tells his tale**, counts his flock. 70. **landskip**, landscape. 71. **fallows**, farm lands left idle for a year. 75. **pied**, party-colored. 80. **cynosure**, the central attraction. The word comes from the Greek name for the constellation containing the North Star.

Where Corydon and Thyrsis met
Are at their savory dinner set
Of herbs and other country messes, 85
Which the neat-handed Phyllis dresses;
And then in haste her bower she leaves
With Thestylis to bind the sheaves;
Or, if the earlier season lead,
To the tanned haycock in the mead. 90
Sometimes, with secure delight,
The upland hamlets will invite,
When the merry bells ring round,
And the jocund rebecks sound
To many a youth and many a maid 95
Dancing in the checkered shade;
And young and old come forth to play
On a sunshine holiday,
Till the livelong daylight fail;
Then to the spicy nut-brown ale, 100
With stories told of many a feat,
How Faëry Mab the junkets eat.
She was pinched and pulled, she said;
And he, by Friar's lantern led,
Tells how the drudging goblin sweat 105
To earn his cream-bowl duly set,
When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
His shadowy flail hath threshed the corn
That ten day-laborers could not end;
Then lies him down, the lubber-fiend, 110
And, stretched out all the chimney's length,
Basks at the fire his hairy strength,
And crop-full out of doors he flings,
Ere the first cock his matin rings.
Thus done the tales, to bed they creep,
By whispering winds soon lulled asleep.
Towered cities please us then, 117
And the busy hum of men,
Where throngs of knights and barons bold,
In weeds of peace, high triumphs hold,
With store of ladies, whose bright eyes
Rain influence, and judge the prize 122
Of wit or arms, while both contend
To win her grace whom all commend.
There let Hymen oft appear 125
In saffron robe, with taper clear,

83. **Corydon, Thyrsis**, names applied to shepherds in Greek pastoral poetry, as are Phyllis and Thestylis. 91. **secure**, carefree. 94. **jocund rebecks**, joyous fiddles. 102. **Faëry Mab**, the English queen of the fairies. 103-104. **She . . . . he**, two of the story-tellers. 104. **Friar's lantern**, will-o'-the-wisp. 105. **drudging goblin**, Puck, the elf of the English farms. 110. **lubber-fiend**, awkward elf. 120. **weeds**, garments. 121. **store of**, many. 125. **Hymen**, the Greek god of marriage.

And pomp, and feast, and revelry,
With masque and antique pageantry;
Such sights as youthful poets dream
On summer eves by haunted stream. 130
Then to the well-trod stage anon,
If Jonson's learned sock be on,
Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
Warble his native wood-notes wild.
And ever, against eating cares, 135
Lap me in soft Lydian airs,
Married to immortal verse,
Such as the meeting soul may pierce,
In notes with many a winding bout
Of linkéd sweetness long drawn out 140
With wanton heed and giddy cunning,
The melting voice through mazes running,
Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony;
That Orpheus' self may heave his head
From golden slumber on a bed 146
Of heaped Elysian flowers, and hear
Such strains as would have won the ear
Of Pluto to have quite set free
His half-regained Eurydice. 150
These delights if thou canst give,
Mirth, with thee I mean to live.

c. 1634 (1645)

IL PENSEROSO

Hence, vain, deluding Joys,
The brood of Folly without father bred!
How little you bestéd,
Or fill the fixéd mind with all your toys!
Dwell in some idle brain, 5
And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess,
As thick and numberless
As the gay motes that people the sunbeams,
Or likest hovering dreams,
The fickle pensioners of Morpheus' train. 10
But, hail! thou Goddess, sage and holy!
Hail, divinest Melancholy!
Whose saintly visage is too bright
To hit the sense of human sight,
And therefore to our weaker view, 15
O'erlaid with black, staid Wisdom's hue;
Black, but such as in esteem
Prince Memnon's sister might beseem,
Or that starred Ethiop queen that strove
To set her beauty's praise above 20
The Sea-nymphs, and their powers offended.
Yet thou art higher far descended;
Thee bright-haired Vesta long of yore
To solitary Saturn bore;
His daughter she; in Saturn's reign 25
Such mixture was not held a stain.
Oft in glimmering bowers and glades
He met her, and in secret shades
Of woody Ida's inmost grove,
Whilst yet there was no fear of Jove. 30
Come, pensive Nun, devout and pure,
Sober, steadfast, and demure,
All in a robe of darkest grain,
Flowing with majestic train,
And sable stole of cypress lawn 35
Over thy decent shoulders drawn.
Come; but keep thy wonted state
With even step, and musing gait,
And looks commercing with the skies,
Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes; 40
There, held in holy passion still,
Forget thyself to marble, till
With a sad, leaden, downward cast
Thou fix them on the earth as fast.
And join with thee calm Peace and Quiet, 45
Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,
And hears the Muses in a ring

130. Milton loved the twilight and evening hours. Cf. "Il Penseroso," "To The Nightingale" (page 399), and *Paradise Lost* (page 73, line 40). 132. **sock.** The classical actors wore a low shoe or sock when playing comedy, and a thick-soled heavy buskin when playing tragedy. 136. **Lydian airs.** The Greeks had at least three different musical modes. The Lydian was that of tender melody. 136-150. No poet loved music more deeply and intelligently than Milton, whose father was by avocation an excellent musician. Cf. "Il Penseroso," 151-166. 145. **Orpheus,** a reference to the famous myth of how Orpheus by his playing of the lyre nearly won back his wife from the halls of death.

Il Penseroso. 3. **bestéd,** satisfy. 6. **fond,** foolish. 10. **pensioners,** retainers, those who receive alms from someone. **Morpheus,** the god of sleep. 14. **hit,** suit. 18. **Memnon,** an Ethiopian prince, who aided the Trojans during the Trojan War. He was considered the most handsome of warriors. Milton supposes the beauty of his sister to be equal. 19. **queen,** Cassiopeia, who was punished for her pride by being made a constellation which hangs upside down half of the time. 23. **Vesta,** goddess of the hearth. 24. **Saturn,** the first ruler of the Greek gods. 29. **Ida,** a mountain in Crete. 33. **grain,** color. 35. **stole,** veil, hood. 36. **decent,** comely. 37. **keep thy state.** Usually this means to take one's seat on a throne under the canopy of state; here it means, "maintain your regal bearing." **wonted,** accustomed. 39. **commercing,** communing. 41. **passion,** ecstasy. 42. **Forget,** etc., "remain fixed so long as to seem a marble statue."

Aye round about Jove's altar sing;
And add to these retiréd Leisure,
That in trim gardens takes his pleasure; 50
But, first and chiefest, with thee bring
Him that yon soars on golden wing,
Guiding the fiery-wheeléd throne,
The cherub Contemplation;
And the mute Silence hist along, 55
'Less Philomel will deign a song,
In her sweetest, saddest plight,
Smoothing the rugged brow of Night,
While Cynthia checks her dragon yoke
Gently o'er the accustomed oak. 60
Sweet bird, that shunn'st the noise of folly,
Most musical, most melancholy!
Thee, chauntress, oft the woods among
I woo, to hear thy evensong;
And, missing thee, I walk unseen 65
On the dry, smooth-shaven green,
To behold the wandering moon
Riding near her highest noon,
Like one that had been led astray
Through the heaven's wide, pathless way, 70
And oft, as if her head she bowed,
Stooping through a fleecy cloud.
Oft, on a plat of rising ground,
I hear the far-off curfew sound,
Over some wide-watered shore, 75
Swinging slow with sullen roar;
Or, if the air will not permit,
Some still, removéd place will fit,
Where glowing embers through the room
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom, 80
Far from all resort of mirth,
Save the cricket on the hearth,
Or the bellman's drowsy charm
To bless the doors from nightly harm.
Or let my lamp, at midnight hour, 85
Be seen in some high, lonely tower,
Where I may oft outwatch the Bear,
With thrice-great Hermes, or unsphere
The spirit of Plato, to unfold
What worlds or what vast regions hold 90
The immortal mind that hath forsook
Her mansion in this fleshly nook;
And of those demons that are found
In fire, air, flood, or underground,
Whose power hath a true consent 95
With planet or with element.
Sometime let gorgeous Tragedy
In sceptered pall come sweeping by,
Presenting Thebes, or Pelops' line,
Or the tale of Troy divine. 100
Or what—though rare—of later age
Ennobled hath the buskined stage.
But, O sad Virgin! that thy power
Might raise Musaeus from his bower;
Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing 105
Such notes as, warbled to the string,
Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,
And made Hell grant what love did seek;
Or call up him that left half told
The story of Cambuscan bold, 110
Of Camball, and of Algarsife,
And who had Canace to wife,
That owned the virtuous ring and glass,
And of the wondrous horse of brass
On which the Tartar king did ride; 115
And if aught else great bards beside
In sage and solemn tunes have sung,
Of tourneys, and of trophies hung,
Of forests, and enchantments drear,
Where more is meant than meets the ear. 120
Thus, Night, oft see me in thy pale career,
Till civil-suited Morn appear,
Not tricked and frounced, as she was wont
With the Attic boy to hunt,
But kerchiefed in a comely cloud, 125
While rocking winds are piping loud,
Or ushered with a shower still,
When the gust hath blown his fill,
Ending on the rustling leaves,
With minute-drops from off the eaves. 130
And, when the sun begins to fling
His flaring beams, me, Goddess, bring

56. **Philomel**, the nightingale. See note on line 7, page 361. 59. **Cynthia**, the moon goddess, whose chariot was drawn by dragons. 63. **chauntress**, singer. 83. **bellman's drowsy charm**, the night watchman's hourly call, "All's well." 88. **thrice-great Hermes.** Hermes Trismegistus (Thrice Great) was a mythical king of Egypt and a great magician. **unsphere**, bring from the place assigned him in the universe.

95. **consent**, harmony. 98. **pall**, a long, sweeping robe. 99. **Thebes**, etc. All of these myths were subjects of classical tragedy. 104-105. **Musaeus, Orpheus.** Milton yearns to recall the past, especially that part whose achievements have been lost, or else have been left incomplete. Musaeus and Orpheus were mythical bards. See note on "L'Allegro" (page 392, line 145). 110. **story of Cambuscan**, a reference to the unfinished *Squire's Tale* in *The Canterbury Tales* of Chaucer. 122 ff. **Morn**, a reference to the love of Eos, the dawn, for Cephalus.

To archéd walks of twilight groves,
And shadows brown, that Silvan loves.
Of pine, or monumental oak, 135
Where the rude ax with heavéd stroke
Was never heard the nymphs to daunt,
Or fright them from their hallowed haunt.
There in close covert, by some brook,
Where no profaner eye may look, 140
Hide me from day's garish eye,
While the bee with honeyed thigh,
That at her flowery work doth sing,
And the waters murmuring,
With such consort as they keep, 145
Entice the dewy-feathered Sleep.
And let some strange, mysterious dream
Wave at his wings, in airy stream
Of lively portraiture displayed,
Softly on my eyelids laid; 150
And, as I wake, sweet music breathe
Above, about, or underneath,
Sent by some Spirit to mortals good,
Or the unseen Genius of the wood.
But let my due feet never fail 155
To walk the studious cloister's pale,
And love the high embowéd roof,
With antique pillars massy-proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim, religious light. 160
There let the pealing organ blow,
To the full-voiced choir below,
In service high and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies, 165
And bring all heaven before mine eyes.
And may at last my weary age
Find out the peaceful hermitage
The hairy gown and mossy cell,
Where I may sit and rightly spell 170
Of every star that heaven doth shew,
And every herb that sips the dew,
Till old experience do attain
To something like prophetic strain. 174
These pleasures, Melancholy, give,
And I with thee will choose to live.

c. 1634 (1645)

134. **brown**, dark. **Silvan.** Silvanus was the Roman god of country and forest. 137. **daunt**, frighten. 141. **garish**, staring. 157. **embowéd**, arched (Gothic). 158. **With antique pillars**, etc., "with ancient pillars massive enough to bear the weight resting upon them." 159. **storied windows**, etc., windows richly painted to tell stories. 170. **rightly spell**, learn the meaning.

From COMUS

I

Comus Speaks

The star that bids the shepherd fold,
Now the top of heaven doth hold,
And the gilded car of day,
His glowing axle doth allay
In the steep Atlantic stream, 5
And the slope sun his upward beam
Shoots against the dusky pole,
Pacing toward the other goal
Of his chamber in the east.
Meanwhile, welcome joy and feast, 10
Midnight shout and revelry,
Tipsy dance and jollity.
Braid your locks with rosy twine,
Dropping odors, dropping wine.
Rigor now is gone to bed, 15
And Advice with scrupulous head;
Strict Age, and sour Severity,
With their grave saws in slumber lie.
We that are of purer fire
Imitate the starry quire, 20
Who in their nightly watchful spheres,
Lead in swift round the months and years.
The sounds and seas with all their finny drove
Now to the moon in wavering morrice move,
And on the tawny sands and shelves, 25
Trip the pert fairies and the dapper elves;
By dimpled brook, and fountain brim,
The wood-nymphs decked with daisies trim,
Their merry wakes and pastimes keep—
What hath night to do with sleep? 30
Night hath better sweets to prove,
Venus now wakes, and wak'ns Love.

. . . . . .

Come, knit hands, and beat the ground,
In a light fantastic round.

Comus. A masque depicting the conflict between lust and chastity. Comus, the son of Circe and Bacchus, vainly attempts the virtue of the Lady, who is protected by her purity, and is rescued by her brothers and the Attendant Spirit.

Comus Speaks. 1. **star**, Hesperus, the evening star. 6. **slope**, slanting. 24. **morrice**, an English country dance. Comus imagines all nature as moving rhythmically to the music of the spheres. See note on *Paradise Lost* (page 76, line 176).

II

The Lady sings

Sweet Echo, sweetest Nymph that liv'st unseen
Within thy airy shell
By slow Meander's margent green,
And in the violet embroidered vale
Where the lovelorn nightingale 5
Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well—
Canst thou not tell me of a gentle pair
That likest thy Narcissus are?
O, if thou have
Hid them in some flowery cave, 10
Tell me but where,
Sweet queen of parley, daughter of the sphere!
So mayst thou be translated to the skies,
And give resounding grace to all heaven's harmonies!

III

The Spirit epiloguizes

To the ocean now I fly,
And those happy climes that lie
Where day never shuts his eye,
Up in the broad fields of the sky.
There I suck the liquid air 5
All amidst the gardens fair
Of Hesperus, and his daughters three
That sing about the golden tree.
Along the crispéd shades and bowers
Revels the spruce and jocund Spring; 10
The Graces, and the rosy-bosomed Hours,
Thither all their bounties bring,
That there eternal Summer dwells,
And west winds, with musky wing
About the cedarn alleys fling 15
Nard, and Cassia's balmy smells.
Iris there with humid bow
Waters the odorous banks that blow
Flowers of more mingled hue
Than her purfled scarf can shew, 20
And drenches with Elysian dew
(List mortals, if your ears be true)
Beds of hyacinth, and roses
Where young Adonis oft reposes,
Waxing well of his deep wound 25
In slumber soft, and on the ground
Sadly sits th' Assyrian queen;
But far above in spangled sheen
Celestial Cupid, her famed son, advanced,
Holds his dear Psyche sweet entranced
After her wandering labors long, 31
Till free consent the gods among
Make her his eternal bride,
And from her fair unspotted side
Two blissful twins are to be born, 35
Youth and Joy; so Jove hath sworn.
But now my task is smoothly done,
I can fly, or I can run
Quickly to the green earth's end,
Where the bowed welkin slow doth bend,
And from thence can soar as soon 41
To the corners of the moon.
Mortals that would follow me,
Love Virtue; she alone is free.
She can teach ye how to climb 45
Higher than the sphery chime;
Or if Virtue feeble were,
Heaven itself would stoop to her.

1634 (1637)

The Lady Sings. 1. **Echo**, a nymph of Artemis, who angered Hera by her constant talk and was forbidden to speak unless spoken to first. She loved Narcissus in vain and pined away until she was only a voice. 3. **Meander**, a Phrygian river. **margent**, margin.

The Spirit epiloguizes. 17. **Iris . . . . . humid bow.** Iris was the goddess of the rainbow. 20. **purfled**, embroidered.

24. **Adonis.** He was killed by a wild boar that ripped open his side. 27. **Assyrian Queen**, really Venus, who was worshiped as Astarte by the Assyrians. She had fallen in love with Adonis. 28. **sheen**, brightness. 40. **bowed welkin**, sky. 46. **sphery chime**, music of the spheres.

LYCIDAS

In this Monody the Author bewails a learned Friend, unfortunately drowned in his passage from Chester on the Irish Seas, 1637; and by occasion, foretells the ruin of our corrupted Clergy, then in their height.

Yet once more, O ye laurels, and once more,
Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sear,
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,
And with forced fingers rude
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year. 5

Lycidas. This monody laments the death of Edward King. As the form is an elegy in the manner of Theocritus, Milton considers himself and his friend as shepherds. In "Lycidas" we can foresee the mature Milton. In two passages, lines 64-84 and 108-131, the young poet questions whether there is any use in keeping true to his ideals when the self-seekers appear to get on so well. The final answer is contained in his life, as expressed in the sonnet "On His Blindness" (page 401), and the "Final Chorus" (page 402) from *Samson Agonistes.* 3. **I come to pluck**, etc., i. e., in order to place them on his empty tomb. Milton implies that the occasion forced him to write poetry before he was ready to do so.

Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear
Compels me to disturb your season due;
For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer.
Who would not sing for Lycidas? He knew 10
Himself to sing, and build the lofty rime.
He must not float upon his watery bier
Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,
Without the meed of some melodious tear.
Begin, then, Sisters of the sacred well, 15
That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring;
Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string.
Hence with denial vain and coy excuse;
So may some gentle muse 19
With lucky words favor my destined urn,
And as he passes turn
And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud!
For we were nursed upon the selfsame hill,
Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and rill;
Together both, ere the high lawns appeared 25
Under the opening eyelids of the Morn,
We drove afield, and both together heard
What time the gray-fly winds her sultry horn,
Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night,
Oft till the star that rose at evening, bright, 30
Toward heaven's descent had sloped his westering wheel.
Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute,
Tempered to the oaten flute;
Rough Satyrs danced, and Fauns with cloven heel
From the glad sound would not be absent long; 35
And old Damoetas loved to hear our song.
But, oh! the heavy change, now thou art gone,
Now thou art gone, and never must return!
Thee, Shepherd, thee the woods and desert caves,
With wild thyme and the gadding vine o'ergrown, 40
And all their echoes, mourn.
The willows, and the hazel copses green,
Shall now no more be seen
Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.
As killing as the canker to the rose, 45
Or taint-worm to the weanling herds that graze,
Or frost to flowers, that their gay wardrobe wear,
When first the white-thorn blows—
Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherd's ear.
Where were ye, Nymphs, when the remorseless deep 50
Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas?
For neither were ye playing on the steep
Where your old bards, the famous Druids, lie,
Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high,
Nor yet where Deva spreads her wizard stream. 55
Aye me! I fondly dream
"Had ye been there"—for what could that have done?
What could the Muse herself that Orpheus bore,
The Muse herself, for her enchanting son,
Whom universal nature did lament, 60
When, by the rout that made the hideous roar,
His gory visage down the stream was sent,
Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore?
Alas! what boots it with uncessant care

15. **sacred well**, the Pierian Spring, the home of the Greek Muses. It was near Mt. Olympus. 23. **nursed**, etc., a reference to their college life at Cambridge. 28. **horn.** The hum of the trumpet fly resounds on hot spring and summer noons. 29. **Battening**, feeding fat.

36. **Damoetas**, a Theocritan shepherd. Possibly the allusion is to the college tutor of Milton and King. 45. **canker**, worm. 54. **Mona**, the ancient name for the Island of Anglesey. 55. **Deva**, the River Dee. 56. **fondly**, idly. 58-63. **What could the Muse**, etc. Even Calliope could not save her son from death when he was attacked by maddened Thracian women. They tore him to pieces and cast him into the River Hebrus, whence he floated to Lesbos. 64. **what boots**, etc., "of what avail is it?"

To tend the homely, slighted shepherd's trade, 65
And strictly meditate the thankless Muse?
Were it not better done as others use,
To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
Or with the tangles of Neaera's hair?
Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise 70
(That last infirmity of noble mind)
To scorn delights, and live laborious days;
But, the fair guerdon when we hope to find,
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
Comes the blind Fury with the abhorréd shears, 75
And slits the thin-spun life. "But not the praise,"
Phoebus replied, and touched my trembling ears;
"Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
Nor in the glistering foil
Set off to the world, nor in broad rumor lies, 80
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes
And perfect witness of all-judging Jove;
As he pronounces lastly on each deed,
Of so much fame in heaven expect thy meed."
O fountain Arethuse, and thou honored flood, 85
Smooth-sliding Mincius, crowned with vocal reeds,
That strain I heard was of a higher mood.
But now my oat proceeds,
And listens to the Herald of the Sea
That came in Neptune's plea. 90
He asked the waves, and asked the felon winds,
What hard mishap hath doomed this gentle swain!
And questioned every gust of rugged wings
That blows from off each beakéd promontory.
They knew not of his story; 95
And sage Hippotades their answer brings,
That not a blast was from his dungeon strayed;
The air was calm, and on the level brine
Sleek Panope with all her sisters played.
It was that fatal and perfidious bark, 100
Built in the eclipse, and rigged with curses dark,
That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.
Next, Camus, reverend sire, went footing slow,
His mantle hairy, and his bonnet sedge,
Inwrought with figures dim, and on the edge 105
Like to that sanguine flower inscribed with woe.
"Ah! who hath reft," quoth he, "my dearest pledge?"
Last came, and last did go,
The Pilot of the Galilean Lake;
Two massy keys he bore of metals twain 110
(The golden opes, the iron shuts amain).
He shook his mitered locks, and stern bespake:
"How well could I have spared for thee, young swain,
Enow of such as, for their bellies' sake,
Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold! 115
Of other care they little reckoning make
Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast,
And shove away the worthy bidden guest.
Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold
A sheep-hook, or have learned aught else the least 120
That to the faithful herdman's art belongs!

68-69. **Amaryllis, Neaera,** shepherdesses in classical Latin pastoral poetry. 73. **guerdon,** reward. 75. **blind Fury,** the impartial Fate Atropos, who cuts the thread of life. 79. **glistering foil,** glittering tinsel. 85-86. **Arethuse, Mincius,** rivers often alluded to by Theocritus in his pastorals. 88. **oat,** oaten flute or pipe. 89. **Herald of the Sea,** Triton. 90. **plea,** inquest. 96. **Hippotades,** Aeolus, the god of the winds. 99. **Panope,** one of the fifty daughters of the sea god Nereus. 100. **bark.** The bark was unlucky, for it was built at an ill-omened time. 103. **Camus,** the personification of the River Cam, which flows through Cambridge. 106. **flower.** The hyacinth, which sprang up after Apollo unwittingly killed Hyacinthus, is supposed to be marked with the Greek word *Ai*, which means "Alas." 109. **Pilot,** St. Peter, who bears the keys of heaven, and wears the bishop's cap, or miter, as the first bishop of Rome. 113. **swain,** countryman. 115. **fold.** Milton symbolizes through shepherds, sheep, and the fold the church situation of his day as it seemed to him.

What recks it them? What need they? They are sped;
And, when they list, their lean and flashy songs
Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw;
The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed, 125
But, swoln with wind and the rank mist they draw,
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread;
Besides what the grim wolf with privy paw
Daily devours apace, and nothing said.
But that two-handed engine at the door 130
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more."
Return, Alpheus, the dread voice is past
That shrunk thy streams; return, Sicilian Muse,
And call the vales, and bid them hither cast
Their bells and flowerets of a thousand hues. 135
Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use
Of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing brooks,
On whose fresh lap the swart star sparely looks,
Throw hither all your quaint enameled eyes,
That on the green turf suck the honeyed showers, 140
And purple all the ground with vernal flowers.
Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies,
The tufted crow-toe, and pale jessamine,
The white pink, and the pansy freaked with jet,
The glowing violet, 145
The musk-rose, and the well-attired woodbine,

122. **What recks**, etc., "what do they care?" **They are sped**, "they are cared for." 123. **flashy**, frothy. 124. **scrannel**, thin. 128. **grim wolf**, the church of Rome. **privy**, referring to secret methods of conversion. 130-131. **two-handed engine**, etc. Retribution will come in the shape of an executioner. What the two-handed engine is no one knows. 132. **Alpheus**, a Greek river in Elis. As a river god he loved Arethusa. 133. **Sicilian Muse**, Theocritus. Milton here returns to the pastoral mood. 138. **swart star**. The dog star was called the black star, and was supposed to blast vegetation. 142. **rathe**, early. 144. **freaked**, irregularly decorated.

With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,
And every flower that sad embroidery wears;
Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,
And daffadillies fill their cups with tears, 150
To strew the laureate hearse where Lycid lies.
For so, to interpose a little ease,
Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise.
Aye me! Whilst thee the shores and sounding seas
Wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurled, 155
Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,
Where thou perhaps under the whelming tide
Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world;
Or whether thou, to our moist vows denied,
Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus old, 160
Where the great Vision of the guarded mount
Looks toward Namancos and Bayona's hold.
Look homeward, Angel, now, and melt with ruth;
And, O ye dolphins, waft the hapless youth.
Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no more, 165
For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead,
Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor;
So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,
And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore 170
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky.
So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
Through the dear might of Him that walked the waves,

149. **amaranthus**, a flower supposed to grow in Elysium. 151. **laureate hearse**, the laurel bier, for Lycidas was a poet. 160. **fable of Bellerus**, his fabled abode at Land's End, Cornwall. 161. **mount**. St. Michael's Mount is a rocky island near Land's End, on which a castle stands. Visions of St. Michael were supposed to be seen there. 162. **Namancos**, a medieval town, in Spain, near the castle of Bayona and Cape Finisterre. 163. **ruth**, pity. 168. **day-star**, sun. 172-181. A reference to heaven as St. John describes it in Revelation, vii, 17.

Where, other groves and other streams along,
With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves, 175
And hears the unexpressive nuptial song,
In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love.
There entertain him all the Saints above,
In solemn troops, and sweet societies,
That sing, and singing in their glory move, 180
And wipe the tears forever from his eyes.
Now, Lycidas, the shepherds weep no more;
Henceforth thou art the Genius of the shore,
In thy large recompense, and shalt be good
To all that wander in that perilous flood. 185
Thus sang the uncouth swain to the oaks and rills,
While the still morn went out with sandals gray;
He touched the tender stops of various quills,
With eager thought warbling his Doric lay.
And now the sun had stretched out all the hills, 190
And now was dropped into the western bay.
At last he rose, and twitched his mantle blue;
Tomorrow to fresh woods and pastures new. (1638)

*SONNETS

TO THE NIGHTINGALE

O Nightingale, that on yon bloomy spray
Warblest at eve, when all the woods are still,
Thou with fresh hope the lover's heart dost fill,
While the jolly hours lead on propitious May.
Thy liquid notes that close the eye of day, 5
First heard before the shallow cuckoo's bill,
Portend success in love. Oh, if Jove's will
Have linked that amorous power to thy soft lay,
Now timely sing, ere the rude bird of hate
Foretell my hopeless doom, in some grove nigh; 10
As thou from year to year hast sung too late
For my relief, yet hadst no reason why.
Whether the Muse or Love call thee his mate,
Both them I serve, and of their train am I. (1645)

ON HIS HAVING ARRIVED AT THE AGE OF TWENTY-THREE

How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,
Stolen on his wing my three and twentieth year!
My hasting days fly on with full career,
But my late spring no bud or blossom shew'th.
Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth 5
That I to manhood am arrived so near;
And inward ripeness doth much less appear,
That some more timely-happy spirits endu'th.
Yet be it less or more, or soon or slow,
It shall be still in strictest measure even
To that same lot, however mean or high,
Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heaven; 12
All is, if I have grace to use it so,
As ever in my great Task-Master's eye. (1645)

176. **unexpressive**, inexpressible. 186. **uncouth swain**, unskilled countryman or shepherd. 188. **stops of various quills**, on his shepherd's pipe. 189. **Doric lay**, pastoral song. Theocritus was from Syracuse, a Dorian colony, and consequently employed the Doric dialect in his poetry. 192. **twitched**, threw about him.

*Milton's sonnets are his autobiography. Compare the attitude of the young poet of the first two sonnets with the life-scarred veteran who wrote the last four.

4. **jolly**, lovely. 6. **shallow cuckoo's bill.** To hear a cuckoo before a nightingale, in the spring, portended bad luck in love for that year. 9. **bird of hate**, the cuckoo.

On His Having Arrived. 5. **semblance**, appearance. 8. **endu'th**, endows. 13-14. **All is**, etc. Cf. the end of the sonnet "On His Blindness" (page 401).

WHEN THE ASSAULT WAS INTENDED TO THE CITY

Captain, or Colonel, or Knight in arms,
Whose chance on these defenseless doors may seize,
If ever deed of honor did thee please,
Guard them, and him within protect from harms.
He can requite thee; for he knows the charms 5
That call fame on such gentle acts as these,
And he can spread thy name o'er lands and seas,
Whatever clime the sun's bright circle warms.
Lift not thy spear against the Muses' bower;
The great Emathian conqueror bid spare
The house of Pindarus, when temple and tower 11
Went to the ground; and the repeated air
Of sad Electra's poet had the power
To save the Athenian walls from ruin bare. (1645)

ON THE DETRACTION WHICH FOLLOWED UPON MY WRITING CERTAIN TREATISES

I did but prompt the age to quit their clogs
By the known rules of ancient liberty,
When straight a barbarous noise environs me
Of owls and cuckoos, asses, apes, and dogs;
As when those hinds that were transformed to frogs 5
Railed at Latona's twin-born progeny,
Which after held the sun and moon in fee.
But this is got by casting pearls to hogs,
That bawl for freedom in their senseless mood,
And still revolt when truth would set them free. 10
License they mean when they cry Liberty;
For who loves that must first be wise and good.
But from that mark how far they rove we see,
For all this waste of wealth and loss of blood. 1645 (1673)

When the Assault. This sonnet was written in November, 1642, when it seemed as if the Cavalier army would enter London. 10. **Emathian conqueror.** Alexander the Great spared the house of the poet Pindar when he sacked Thebes, 333 B.C. 12. **repeated air.** When Sparta prepared to level the walls of Athens after its surrender, 404 B.C., it is said that Lysander, the Spartan general, happened to hear a recital of part of the *Electra* by the dramatist Euripides, and spared the city.

On the Detraction. The treatises referred to in the title dealt with divorce. When Milton was angry he did not always reason well or maintain his dignity. The first sonnet, omitted here, is savage doggerel. In the second he has overcome his anger in part. 5-7. **As when,** etc. When Latona was about to bear Apollo and Artemis, some farmers refused to let her drink out of their lake. At her prayer they were changed into frogs.

TO THE LORD GENERAL CROMWELL, MAY, 1652

ON THE PROPOSALS OF CERTAIN MINISTERS AT THE COMMITTEE FOR PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL

Cromwell, our chief of men, who through a cloud
Not of war only, but detractions rude,
Guided by faith and matchless fortitude,
To peace and truth thy glorious way hast plowed,
And on the neck of crownéd Fortune proud 5
Hast reared God's trophies, and his work pursued,
While Darwen stream, with blood of Scots imbrued,
And Dunbar field resounds thy praises loud,
And Worcester's laureate wreath. Yet much remains
To conquer still; peace hath her victories 10
No less renowned than war; new foes arise,

7. **fee,** possession.

To The Lord General Cromwell. Title. **proposals,** among them, that the Puritan ministers be supported by the Government. 7. **Darwen stream,** near Preston Pans, where Cromwell defeated the Scotch, August 17, 1648. 8. **Dunbar field.** There Cromwell on September 3, 1650, defeated the Scotch, who had rallied to the banner of Charles II. 9. **Worcester's laureate wreath.** Exactly a year after the battle of Dunbar, Cromwell again defeated the Royalists at Worcester.

Threatening to bind our souls with secular chains.
Help us to save free conscience from the paw
Of hireling wolves, whose gospel is their maw. (1694)

ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEDMONT

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshiped stocks and stones,
Forget not; in thy book record their groans 5
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piemontese, that rolled
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow 10
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway
The triple tyrant; that from these may grow
A hundredfold, who, having learnt thy way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe.
1655 (1673)

ON HIS BLINDNESS

When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present 5
My true account, lest he returning chide;
"Doth God exact day-labor, light denied?"
I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts. Who best 10
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait." c. 1655 (1673)

On the Late Massacre in Piedmont. In 1655 the Duke of Savoy murderously persecuted the Vaudois, who were the Protestant group in Piedmont. Protestant England was indignant, and Milton wrote the letter of protest from the English government to the Duke of Savoy. The sonnet expresses Milton's personal feelings. 3. **kept thy truth.** The Vaudois were an ancient Protestant sect. 12. **triple tyrant.** Milton means the Pope, who wears a triple tiara. 14. **Babylonian woe.** The Puritans thought of Rome as the Babylon spoken of in Revelation.

On His Blindness. Cf. "Epilogue to Asolando" (page 569).

TO CYRIACK SKINNER

Cyriack, this three years' day these eyes, though clear
To outward view, of blemish or of spot,
Bereft of light, their seeing have forgot;
Nor to their idle orbs doth sight appear
Of sun or moon or star throughout the year, 5
Or man or woman. Yet I argue not
Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot
Of heart or hope, but still bear up and steer
Right onward. What supports me, dost thou ask?
The conscience, friend, to have lost them overplied 10
In liberty's defense, my noble task,
Of which all Europe talks from side to side.
This thought might lead me through the world's vain mask
Content, though blind, had I no better guide. c. 1655 (1673)

8. **fondly**, foolishly.

To Cyriack Skinner. Cyriac Skinner was a young scholar and friend of Milton. Milton became blind in 1652. 7. **bate a jot**, lose a bit. 12. **Europe talks.** Time effects many changes. We think little of his controversial pamphlets now.

ON HIS DECEASED WIFE

Methought I saw my late espouséd saint
Brought to me like Alcestis from the grave,
Whom Jove's great son to her glad husband gave,
Rescued from death by force though pale and faint.
Mine as whom washed from spot of childbed taint, 5
Purification in the old law did save,
And such, as yet once more I trust to have
Full sight of her in heaven without restraint,
Came vested all in white, pure as her mind.
Her face was veiled, yet to my fancied sight, 10
Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shined
So clear, as in no face with more delight.
But O, as to embrace me she inclined,
I waked, she fled, and day brought back my night. c. 1658 (1673)

FINAL CHORUS

From SAMSON AGONISTES

All is best, though we oft doubt,
What th' unsearchable dispose
Of highest wisdom brings about,
And ever best found in the close.
Oft He seems to hide His face, 5
But unexpectedly returns
And to his faithful champion hath in place
Bore witness gloriously; whence Gaza mourns
And all that band them to resist
His uncontrollable intent. 10
His servants He with new acquist
Of true experience from this great event
With peace and consolation hath dismist,
And calm of mind all passion spent.
(1671)

On His Deceased Wife. On November 12, 1657, Milton married Catherine Woodcock as his second wife. She died in 1658 shortly after bearing a child. The poem beautifully expresses Milton's personal grief in terms of the Greek myth of how Alcestis gave her life that her husband Admetus might live, and how Heracles wrestled with Death and restored her to Admetus. Cf. "The Blessed Damozel" (page 587) and *Sonnets from the Portuguese,* XLIII (page 520). 6. **old law,** Leviticus, xii. 10. **veiled.** This is a beautiful touch. Milton probably had never seen her, for he was blind by 1652. Hence all she meant to him came through her invisible qualities.

Final Chorus. Milton's last work, *Samson Agonistes,* is a tragedy modeled on the Greek form. The climax is the pulling down of Dagon's temple by Samson. *Agonistes* means "contestant," and Samson's last act was to appear in the arena to amuse the Philistine lords. 8. **Gaza,** a Philistine stronghold.

11. **acquist,** acquisition.

GEORGE WITHER (1588-1667)

THE LOVER'S RESOLUTION

Shall I, wasting in despair,
Die because a woman's fair?
Or make pale my cheeks with care
'Cause another's rosy are?
Be she fairer than the day, 5
Or the flow'ry meads in May,
If she think not well of me,
What care I how fair she be?

Shall my silly heart be pined
'Cause I see a woman kind? 10
Or a well disposéd nature
Joinéd with a lovely feature?
Be she meeker, kinder, than
Turtle-dove or pelican,
If she be not so to me, 15
What care I how kind she be?

Shall a woman's virtues move
Me to perish for her love?
Or her well-deservings known
Make me quite forget my own? 20
Be she with that goodness blest
Which may merit name of Best,
If she be not such to me,
What care I how good she be?

'Cause her fortune seems too high, 25
Shall I play the fool and die?
She that bears a noble mind,
If not outward helps she find,
Thinks what with them he would do
That without them dares her woo; 30
And unless that mind I see,
What care I how great she be?

The Lover's Resolution. 14. **Turtle-dove,** a symbol of love. **pelican,** a symbol of parental love, from the belief that to keep its young from starving the pelican will tear open its breast and let them drink its lifeblood.

Great, or good, or kind, or fair,
I will ne'er the more despair;
If she love me, this believe, 35
I will die ere she shall grieve;
If she slight me when I woo,
I can scorn and let her go;
For if she be not for me,
What care I for whom she be?
(1615)

WHEN WE ARE UPON THE SEAS

On those great waters now I am,
Of which I have been told,
That whosoever thither came
Should wonders there behold.
In this unsteady place of fear, 5
Be present, Lord, with me;
For in these depths of water here,
I depths of danger see.

A stirring courser now I sit;
A headstrong steed I ride, 10
That champs and foams upon the bit
Which curbs his lofty pride.
The softest whistling of the winds
Doth make him gallop fast;
And as their breath increased he finds
The more he maketh haste. 16

Take thou, O Lord! the reins in hand,
Assume our Master's room;
Vouchsafe thou at our helm to stand,
And pilot to become. 20
Trim thou the sails, and let good speed
Accompany our haste;
Sound thou the channels at our need
And anchor for us cast.

A fit and favorable wind 25
To further us, provide;
And let it wait on us behind,
Or lackey by our side.
From sudden gusts, from storms, from sands,
And from the raging wave; 30
From shallows, rocks, and pirates' hands,
Men, goods, and vessel save.

When We Are upon the Seas. From *Hallelujah*, a collection of Puritan hymns written by Wither and published in 1641. Cf. the hymns in this book by Addison, Pope, Watts, Wesley, Newman, Whittier, and Holmes.

Preserve us from the wants, the fear,
And sickness of the seas;
But chiefly from our sins, which are 35
A danger worse than these.
Lord! let us, also, safe arrive
Where we desire to be;
And for thy mercies let us give
Due thanks and praise to thee.
(1641)

THE PRAYER OF OLD AGE

As this my carnal robe grows old,
Soiled, rent, and worn by length of years,
Let me on that by faith lay hold
Which man in life immortal wears.
So sanctify my days behind, 5
Do let my manners be refined,
That when my soul and flesh must part,
There lurk no terrors in my heart.

So shall my rest be safe and sweet
When I am lodgéd in my grave; 10
And when my soul and body meet,
A joyful meeting they shall have;
Their essence, then, shall be divine,
This muddy flesh shall starlike shine.
And God shall that fresh youth restore
Which will abide for evermore. (1641)

ANDREW MARVELL (1621-1678)

A GARDEN

WRITTEN AFTER THE CIVIL WARS

See how the flowers, as at parade,
Under their colors stand displayed;
Each regiment in order grows,
That of the tulip, pink, and rose.
But when the vigilant patrol 5
Of stars walks round about the pole,
Their leaves, that to the stalks are curled,
Seem to their staves the ensigns furled.
Then in some flower's belovéd hut
Each bee, as sentinel, is shut, 10
And sleeps so, too; but if once stirred,
She runs you through, nor asks the word.

The Prayer of Old Age. Only the last part is given here.

O thou, that dear and happy Isle,
The garden of the world erewhile,
Thou Paradise of the four seas 15
Which Heaven planted us to please,
But, to exclude the world, did guard
With wat'ry if not flaming sword;
What luckless apple did we taste
To make us mortal and thee waste! 20
Unhappy! shall we never more
That sweet militia restore,
When gardens only had their towers,
And all the garrisons were flowers;
When roses only arms might bear, 25
And men did rosy garlands wear! (1681)

BERMUDAS

Where the remote Bermudas ride
In the ocean's bosom unespied,
From a small boat that rowed along
The listening winds received this song:

"What should we do but sing His praise 5
That led us through the watery maze
Unto an isle so long unknown,
And yet far kinder than our own?
Where He the huge sea-monsters wracks
That lift the deep upon their backs, 10
He lands us on a grassy stage,
Safe from the storms' and prelates' rage.
He gave us this eternal spring
Which here enamels everything,
And sends the fowls to us in care 15
On daily visits through the air.
He hangs in shades the orange bright
Like golden lamps in a green night,
And does in the pomegranates close
Jewels more rich than Ormus shows. 20
He makes the figs our mouths to meet
And throws the melons at our feet;
But apples plants of such a price,
No tree could ever bear them twice.
With cedars chosen by His hand 25
From Lebanon He stores the land;
And makes the hollow seas that roar
Proclaim the ambergris on shore.
He cast (of which we rather boast)
The Gospel's pearl upon our coast; 30
And in these rocks for us did frame
A temple where to sound His name.

22. **militia**, military order.
Bermudas. 12. **prelates' rage**, a Puritan allusion to their persecution by the Established Church of England. 20. **Ormus**, Persia.

Oh, let our voice His praise exalt
Till it arrive at heaven's vault,
Which thence, perhaps, rebounding may
Echo beyond the Mexique bay!" 36

Thus sung they in the English boat
A holy and a cheerful note;
And all the way, to guide their chime,
With falling oars they kept the time.
(1681)

HENRY VAUGHAN (c.1621-1695)

THE RETREAT

Happy those early days, when I
Shined in my angel-infancy!
Before I understood this place
Appointed for my second race,
Or taught my soul to fancy aught 5
But a white celestial thought;
When yet I had not walked above
A mile or two from my first Love,
And looking back—at that short space—
Could see a glimpse of His bright face;
When on some gilded cloud, or flower,
My gazing soul would dwell an hour, 12
And in those weaker glories spy
Some shadows of eternity;
Before I taught my tongue to wound 15
My conscience with a sinful sound,
Or had the black art to dispense
A several sin to ev'ry sense,
But felt through all this fleshly dress
Bright shoots of everlastingness. 20

O how I long to travel back,
And tread again that ancient track!
That I might once more reach that plain
Where first I left my glorious train;
From whence th' enlightened spirit sees
That shady City of Palm-trees. 26
But ah! my soul with too much stay
Is drunk, and staggers in the way!
Some men a forward motion love,
But I by backward steps would move;
And when this dust falls to the urn, 31
In that state I came, return. (1650)

The Retreat. Vaughan, as a mystical poet sought peace either in the past or in the future. "The Retreat" recalls the past. Note the variations of this theme in "There Was a Boy" (page 454), "Intimations of Immortality" (page 465), "I Remember" (page 476), "Sing Me a Song of a Lad That Is Gone" (page 598), "My Lost Youth" (page 639), and "The Barefoot Boy" (page 644).

PEACE

My soul, there is a country
  Far beyond the stars,
Where stands a wingéd sentry
  All skillful in the wars.
There, above noise and danger, 5
  Sweet Peace sits crowned with smiles,
And One born in a manger
  Commands the beauteous files.
He is thy gracious Friend,
  And—O my soul, awake!— 10
Did in pure love descend
  To die here for thy sake.
If thou canst get but thither,
  There grows the flower of Peace,
The Rose that cannot wither, 15
  Thy fortress, and thy ease.
Leave then thy foolish ranges;
  For none can thee secure
But One who never changes—
  Thy God, thy life, thy cure. (1650)

THE WORLD

I saw Eternity the other night,
Like a great ring of pure and endless light,
  All calm, as it was bright;
And round beneath it, Time, in hours, days, years,
  Driven by the spheres 5
Like a vast shadow moved; in which the world
  And all her train were hurled.
The doting lover in his quaintest strain
  Did there complain;
Near him, his lute, his fancy, and his flights, 10
  Wit's sour delights,
With gloves, and knots, the silly snares of pleasure,
  Yet his dear treasure,
All scattered lay, while he his eyes did pour
  Upon a flower. 15

The darksome statesman, hung with weights and woe,
Like a thick midnight-fog moved there so slow,
  He did not stay, nor go;
Condemning thoughts, like sad eclipses, scowl
  Upon his soul, 20
And clouds of crying witnesses without
  Pursued him with one shout.
Yet digged the mole, and lest his ways be found,
  Worked under ground,
Where he did clutch his prey; but one did see 25
  That policy;
Churches and altars fed him; perjuries
  Were gnats and flies;
It rained about him blood and tears, but he
  Drank them as free. 30

The fearful miser on a heap of rust
Sat pining all his life there, did scarce trust
  His own hands with the dust,
Yet would not place one piece above, but lives
  In fear of thieves. 35
Thousands there were as frantic as himself,
  And hugged each one his pelf;
The downright epicure placed heaven in sense,
  And scorned pretense;
While others, slipped into a wide excess,
  Said little less; 41
The weaker sort, slight, trivial wares enslave,
  Who think them brave;
And poor, despiséd Truth sat counting by
  Their victory. 45

Yet some, who all this while did weep and sing,
And sing and weep, soared up into the ring;
  But most would use no wing.
O fools, said I, thus to prefer dark night
  Before true light! 50
To live in grots and caves, and hate the day
  Because it shows the way,
The way, which from this dead and dark abode
  Leads up to God;

The World. A half mystical, half humorous description of the folly of the world.

A way there you might tread the sun, and be 55
More bright than he!
But, as I did their madness so discuss,
One whispered thus
"This ring the Bridegroom did for none provide,
But for his bride." (1650)

THE TIMBER

Sure thou didst flourish once! and many springs,
Many bright mornings, much dew, many showers,
Passed o'er thy head; many light hearts and wings,
Which now are dead, lodged in thy living bowers.

And still a new succession sings and flies; 5
Fresh groves grow up, and their green branches shoot
Toward the old and still enduring skies,
While the low violet thrives at their root.

But thou beneath the sad and heavy line
Of death doth waste all senseless, cold, and dark; 10
Where not so much as dreams of light may shine,
Nor any thought of greenness, leaf, or bark.

And yet—as if some deep hate and dissent,
Bred in thy growth betwixt high winds and thee,
Were still alive—thou dost great storms resent 15
Before they come, and know'st how near they be.

Else all at rest thou liest, and the fierce breath
Of tempests can no more disturb thy ease;
But this thy strange resentment after death
Means only those who broke—in life—thy peace. (1655)

DEPARTED FRIENDS

They are all gone into the world of light!
And I alone sit lingering here;
Their very memory is fair and bright,
And my sad thoughts doth clear.

It glows and glitters in my cloudy breast, 5
Like stars upon some gloomy grove,
Or those faint beams in which this hill is drest,
After the sun's remove.

I see them walking in an air of glory,
Whose light doth trample on my days; 10
My days, which are at best but dull and hoary,
Mere glimmering and decays.

O holy Hope! and high Humility,
High as the heavens above!
These are your walks, and you have showed them me, 15
To kindle my cold love.

Dear, beauteous Death! the jewel of the just,
Shining nowhere but in the dark,
What mysteries do lie beyond thy dust,
Could man outlook that mark! 20

He that hath found some fledged bird's nest, may know
At first sight if the bird be flown;
But what fair well or grove he sings in now,
That is to him unknown.

And yet, as angels in some brighter dreams 25
Call to the soul, when man doth sleep,
So some strange thoughts transcend our wonted themes,
And into glory peep.

If a star were confined into a tomb,
The captive flames must needs burn there, 30

Departed Friends. Cf. "The Old Familiar Faces" (page 471) and "The Land o' the Leal" (page 451). In "Departed Friends" the poet yearns for peace in the future.

But when the hand that locked her up, gives room,
She'll shine through all the sphere.

O Father of eternal life, and all
Created glories under thee,
Resume thy spirit from this world of thrall 35
Into true liberty.

Either disperse these mists, which blot and fill
My perspective still as they pass,
Or else remove me hence unto that hill,
Where I shall need no glass. (1655)

ABRAHAM COWLEY (1618-1667)

THE SWALLOW

Foolish prater, what do'st thou
So early at my window do
With thy tuneless serenade?
Well 't had been, had Tereus made
Thee as dumb as Philomel; 5
There his knife had done but well.
In thy undiscovered nest
Thou dost all the winter rest,
And dreamest o'er thy summer joys,
Free from the stormy season's noise, 10
Free from th' ill thou'st done to me;
Who disturbs, or seeks out thee?
Had'st thou all the charming notes
Of the wood's poetic throats,
All thy art could never pay 15
What thou'st ta'en from me away;
Cruel bird, thou'st ta'en away
A dream out of my arms today,
A dream that ne'er must equaled be
By all that waking eyes may see. 20
Thou this damage to repair,
Nothing half so sweet or fair,
Nothing half so good can'st bring,
Though men say, "Thou bring'st the spring." (1647)

The Swallow. Cowley's inspiration was not great, but he treated such simple themes adequately. Note the contrast in poetic feeling between Cowley and his predecessors. The poem is translated from the *Anacreontics*, late Greek imitations of the love songs of Anacreon. 5. **Philomel.** Tereus, king of Thrace, having tired of his wife, Procne, who had borne him a son, Itys, hid her away, and dishonored her sister, Philomela, whose tongue he cut out. Philomela wove a web which revealed the truth to Procne; and the two killed Itys, and gave his body to his father as food. The gods punished the group by transforming Procne into a swallow, Philomela into a nightingale, and Tereus into a hawk, which always pursued them.

THE WISH

Well then! I now do plainly see
This busy world and I shall ne'er agree.
The very honey of all earthly joy
Does of all meats the soonest cloy;
And they, methinks, deserve my pity
Who for it can endure the stings, 6
The crowd and buzz and murmurings,
Of this great hive, the city.

Ah, yet, ere I descend to the grave
May I a small house and large garden have; 10
And a few friends, and many books, both true,
Both wise, and both delightful, too!
And since love ne'er will from me flee,
A mistress moderately fair,
And good as guardian angels are, 15
Only beloved and loving me.

O fountains! when in you shall I
Myself eased of unpeaceful thoughts espy?
O fields! O woods! when, when shall I be made
The happy tenant of your shade? 20
Here's the spring-head of pleasure's flood;
Here's wealthy Nature's treasury,
Where all the riches lie that she
Has coined and stamped for good.

Pride and ambition here 25
Only in far-fetched metaphors appear;
Here naught but winds can hurtful murmurs scatter,
And naught but Echo flatter.
The gods, when they descended, hither
From heaven did always choose their way; 30
And therefore we may boldly say
That 'tis the way, too, thither.

How happy here should I
And one dear She live, and embracing die!
She who is all the world, and can exclude,
In deserts, solitude. 36
I should have then this only fear:
Lest men, when they my pleasures see,
Should hither throng to live like me,
And so make a city here. (1647)

The Wish. Cf. "A Thanksgiving to God for His House" (page 384) and "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" (page 633).

EDMUND WALLER (1606-1687)

GO, LOVELY ROSE

Go, lovely Rose—
Tell her that wastes her time and me
That now she knows,
When I resemble her to thee,
How sweet and fair she seems to be. 5

Tell her that's young,
And shuns to have her graces spied,
That hadst thou sprung
In deserts where no men abide,
Thou must have uncommended died. 10

Small is the worth
Of beauty from the light retired;
Bid her come forth,
Suffer herself to be desired,
And not blush so to be admired. 15

Then die—that she
The common fate of all things rare
May read in thee;
How small a part of time they share
That are so wondrous sweet and fair!
(1645)

OLD AGE

The seas are quiet when the winds give o'er;
So calm are we when passions are no more.
For then we know how vain it was to boast
Of fleeting things, so certain to be lost.
Clouds of affection from our younger eyes 5
Conceal that emptiness which age descries.

The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,
Lets in new light through chinks that Time hath made.
Stronger by weakness wiser men become
As they draw near to their eternal home. 10
Leaving the old, both worlds at once they view
That stand upon the threshold of the new.
(1686)

Go, Lovely Rose. Waller popularized the heroic couplet, and had distinct ability in lyric forms. No more beautiful love lyric than "Go, Lovely Rose" was written after his day until the time of Blake and Burns.

Old Age. The seventeenth century prized the dignity, moral sentiment, and compact and brilliant expression of such poems.

JOHN DRYDEN (1631-1700)

A SONG FOR ST. CECILIA'S DAY, NOVEMBER 22, 1687

From harmony, from heavenly harmony
This universal frame began;
When Nature underneath a heap
Of jarring atoms lay,
And could not heave her head, 5
The tuneful voice was heard from high,
Arise, ye more than dead.

Then cold and hot and moist and dry
In order to their stations leap,
And Music's power obey. 10
From harmony, from heavenly harmony
This universal frame began;
From harmony to harmony

A Song for St. Cecilia's Day. Much of Dryden's poetry lies in the field of satire and translation, but he was also master of an elaborate lyric form, the choral ode, which was patterned after the triumphal odes of Pindar. The basic scheme of such odes is a strophe followed by an antistrophe of the same metrical structure. Frequently a third stanza with a different metrical scheme is added, and is known as the epode. Many odes merely use a series of strophes and antistrophes, but Gray in "The Bard" uses the strophe, antistrophe, and epode. Few English poets have closely followed the structure of the Pindaric ode, which was meant to be sung by a chorus and be accompanied by dancing. Dryden's odes, however, were sung by a choral society which commissioned him to write an ode for their annual festival in 1687, and again in 1697. Dryden altered the Pindaric scheme to meet the literary taste of the time. In the first ode a number of stanzas exemplify diverse kinds of music and emotion, and the ode terminates with a climactic chorus. In the second ode, stanzas exemplifying the emotions roused by the minstrel Timotheus are each followed by a choral refrain, and the ode ends in a climactic chorus. These odes exhibit what the neo-classical age of the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries expected of poetry. It must be elevated and dignified; if any emotion was expressed, it must not be individual and common, but collective and exceptional in its grandeur; the subject should be classical or at least have classical form and allusions. Pope perfected what Dryden began. In the eighteenth century Gray made the best use of the Pindaric ode, both in a simple English modification and in its elaborate Greek form, but his work is approached closely in excellence by Collins. In the nineteenth century Wordsworth did not follow the Pindaric form strictly in his ode "Intimations of Immortality," but composed long and elaborate metrical stanzas which have no metrical correspondence between themselves. His example has been generally followed by both English and American poets. 1-15. **From harmony**, etc. Notice in the first two stanzas of this ode the mingling of philosophical, religious, and pseudo-scientific reflection.

Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
The diapason closing full in Man. 15

What passion cannot Music raise and quell?
When Jubal struck the chorded shell,
His listening brethren stood around,
And, wondering, on their faces fell
To worship that celestial sound. 20
Less than a god they thought there could not dwell
Within the hollow of that shell,
That spoke so sweetly, and so well.
What passion cannot Music raise and quell?

The trumpet's loud clangor 25
Excites us to arms
With shrill notes of anger
And mortal alarms.
The double, double, double beat
Of the thundering drum 30
Cries, hark! the foes come;
Charge, charge, 'tis too late to retreat!
The soft complaining flute
In dying notes discovers
The woes of hopeless lovers, 35
Whose dirge is whispered by the warbling lute.

Sharp violins proclaim
Their jealous pangs and desperation,
Fury, frantic indignation,
Depth of pains and height of passion,
For the fair, disdainful dame. 41

But, oh! what art can teach,
What human voice can reach
The sacred organ's praise?
Notes inspiring holy love, 45
Notes that wing their heavenly ways
To mend the choirs above.

Orpheus could lead the savage race,
And trees unrooted left their place,
Sequacious of the lyre; 50

But bright Cecilia raised the wonder higher;
When to her organ vocal breath was given,
An angel heard, and straight appeared,
Mistaking earth for heaven.

GRAND CHORUS

As from the power of sacred lays 55
The spheres began to move,
And sung the great Creator's praise
To all the blest above;
So when the last and dreadful hour
This crumbling pageant shall devour, 60
The trumpet shall be heard on high,
The dead shall live, the living die,
And Music shall untune the sky.

(1693)

15. **diapason**, the entire compass of tones on any instrument; the fundamental stop on any organ, by which all the stops can be thrown into play. 17. **Jubal.** See Genesis, iv, 21. He was regarded as the inventor of the harp. 25 ff. **The trumpet**, etc. Notice the imitative metrical modulations. 48. **Orpheus**, a mythical Greek musician, whose music had wondrous powers. How he almost won back his wife Eurydice from the courts of the dead, and how he was torn to pieces later by mad Thracian women, have been the subjects of myth and poetry from earliest Greek times. 50. **Sequacious of**, following.

51. **Cecilia**, St. Cecilia, the patron saint of music. Her playing on the organ is supposed to have called down the angels from heaven. 56-57. **The spheres . . . sung.** The music of the spheres is meant.

Alexander's Feast. Dryden manufactured from legends about Alexander the Great a truly magnificent picture of a banquet, where Alexander's emotions are played upon by his minstrel Timotheus. 9. **Thais**, a courtesan of Athens, who accompanied Alexander to Persia. 15. **None but**, etc. Notice that the Restoration poets tend to compress their thoughts or emotions within a single line or a couplet.

ALEXANDER'S FEAST, OR, THE POWER OF MUSIC

A SONG
IN HONOR OF ST. CECILIA'S DAY, 1697

'Twas at the royal feast for Persia won
By Philip's warlike son—
Aloft in awful state
The godlike hero sate
On his imperial throne; 5
His valiant peers were placed around,
Their brows with roses and with myrtles bound
(So should desert in arms be crowned);
The lovely Thais by his side
Sate like a blooming Eastern bride,
In flower of youth and beauty's pride— 11
Happy, happy, happy pair!
None but the brave,
None but the brave,
None but the brave deserves the fair! 15

CHORUS

Happy, happy, happy pair!
None but the brave,
None but the brave,
None but the brave deserves the fair.

Timotheus, placed on high 20
Amid the tuneful quire,
With flying fingers touched the lyre;
The trembling notes ascend the sky,
And heavenly joys inspire.
The song began from Jove 25
Who left his blissful seats above—
Such is the power of mighty love!
A dragon's fiery form belied the god;
Sublime on radiant spires he rode
When he to fair Olympia pressed, 30
And while he sought her snowy breast;
Then round her slender waist he curled,
And stamped an image of himself, a sovereign of the world.
The listening crowd admire the lofty sound;
A present deity! they shout around; 35
A present deity! the vaulted roofs rebound.
With ravished ears
The monarch hears,
Assumes the god,
Affects to nod, 40
And seems to shake the spheres.

CHORUS

With ravished ears
The monarch hears,
Assumes the god,
Affects to nod, 45
And seems to shake the spheres.

The praise of Bacchus then the sweet musician sung,
Of Bacchus ever fair and ever young.
The jolly god in triumph comes;
Sound the trumpets, beat the drums! 50
Flushed with a purple grace
He shows his honest face.
Now give the hautboys breath; he comes, he comes.
Bacchus, ever fair and young,
Drinking joys did first ordain; 55
Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,
Drinking is the soldier's pleasure;
Rich the treasure,
Sweet the pleasure,
Sweet is pleasure after pain. 60

CHORUS

Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,
Drinking is the soldier's pleasure;
Rich the treasure,
Sweet the pleasure,
Sweet is pleasure after pain. 65

Soothed with the sound, the king grew vain;
Fought all his battles o'er again;
And thrice he routed all his foes, and thrice he slew the slain!
The master saw the madness rise,
His glowing cheeks, his ardent eyes; 70
And while he heaven and earth defied,
Changed his hand and checked his pride.
He chose a mournful Muse
Soft pity to infuse.
He sung Darius great and good, 75
By too severe a fate
Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,
Fallen from his high estate,
And weltering in his blood;
Deserted at his utmost need 80
By those his former bounty fed;
On the bare earth exposed he lies
With not a friend to close his eyes.
With downcast looks the joyless victor sate,
Revolving in his altered soul 85
The various turns of chance below;
And now and then a sigh he stole,
And tears began to flow.

21. **quire**, choir. 25. **from Jove**, etc. Pindaric odes related some heroic or divine myth, and Timotheus here relates the supposed paternity of Alexander. Jove, in the form of a dragon, descended from heaven and became his father by Olympia, the queen of Philip of Macedon. 47. **Bacchus**, the god of wine.

53. **hautboys**, wood-wind instruments. 75. **Darius**, the king of Persia, whom Alexander defeated and dethroned.

CHORUS

Revolving in his altered soul
The various turns of chance below;
And, now and then, a sigh he stole,
And tears began to flow.

The mighty master smiled to see
That love was in the next degree;
'Twas but a kindred sound to move,
For pity melts the mind to love.
Softly sweet, in Lydian measures,
Soon he soothed his soul to pleasures.
War (he sung) is toil and trouble,
Honor but an empty bubble;
Never ending, still beginning,
Fighting still, and still destroying;
If the world be worth thy winning,
Think, O think, it worth enjoying.
Lovely Thais sits beside thee,
Take the good the gods provide thee!
The many rend the skies with loud applause;
So love was crowned, but music won the cause.
The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
Gazed on the fair
Who caused his care,
And sighed and looked, sighed and looked,
Sighed and looked, and sighed again.
At length, with love and wine at once oppressed
The vanquished victor sunk upon her breast.

CHORUS

The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
Gazed on the fair
Who caused his care,
And sighed and looked, sighed and looked,
Sighed and looked, and sighed again.
At length, with love and wine at once oppressed,
The vanquished victor sunk upon her breast.

97. **Lydian measures**, the Greek musical mode for love poetry (see note on line 136, page 392).

Now strike the golden lyre again,
A louder yet, and yet a louder strain!
Break his bands of sleep asunder
And rouse him like a rattling peal of thunder.
Hark, hark! the horrid sound
Has raised up his head;
As awaked from the dead
And amazed he stares around.
"Revenge, revenge!" Timotheus cries,
"See the Furies arise!
See the snakes that they rear,
How they hiss in their hair,
And the sparkles that flash from their eyes!
Behold a ghastly band,
Each a torch in his hand!
Those are Grecian ghosts that in battle were slain
And unburied remain
Inglorious on the plain.
Give the vengeance due
To the valiant crew!
Behold how they toss their torches on high,
How they point to the Persian abodes
And glittering temples of their hostile gods!"
The princes applaud with a furious joy;
And the King seized a flambeau with zeal to destroy;
Thais led the way
To light him to his prey,
And, like another Helen, fired another Troy!

CHORUS

And the King seized a flambeau with zeal to destroy;
Thais led the way,
To light him to his prey,
And, like another Helen, fired another Troy.

Thus, long ago,
Ere heaving bellows learned to blow,
While organs yet were mute,
Timotheus, to his breathing flute

132. **Furies arise.** The Furies avenged the murdered. Here the ghosts of the slain Greeks are said by Timotheus to urge Alexander to burn Persepolis, the capital of Persia, where Alexander is holding his feast. 147. **flambeau**, torch. 150. **Helen.** In one account of the fall of Troy Helen aided the Greeks to fire the town.

And sounding lyre,
Could swell the soul to rage, or kindle soft desire. 160
At last divine Cecilia came,
Inventress of the vocal frame;
The sweet enthusiast from her sacred store
Enlarged the former narrow bounds,
And added length to solemn sounds, 165
With nature's mother-wit, and arts unknown before.
Let old Timotheus yield the prize
Or both divide the crown;

161. **Cecilia.** St. Cecilia is brought in with some difficulty, but since the society was in her honor and the ode was sung on her day, she had to be mentioned.

He raised a mortal to the skies;
She drew an angel down! 170

GRAND CHORUS

At last divine Cecilia came,
Inventress of the vocal frame;
The sweet enthusiast from her sacred store
Enlarged the former narrow bounds,
And added length to solemn sounds, 175
With nature's mother-wit, and arts unknown before.
Let old Timotheus yield the prize
Or both divide the crown;
He raised a mortal to the skies;
She drew an angel down! (1697)

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

NOTE

Although prose was the principal medium for the literary expression of the eighteenth century, and was best suited to express its ideas and general temper, yet poetry played a considerable and important part. During the first half of the century the neo-classical school, headed by Pope, continued the tradition of Waller and Dryden, and elaborated it. Poetry became an accomplishment of the intellect rather than a vehicle for expressing the emotions. Satire, philosophy, criticism, and translation occupied the attention of most of the poets of the period, and their lyric poetry confined itself chiefly to hymns, elegies, and odes. But in the middle of the century the expression of individual emotion began to develop until it culminated in the Romantic Movement of the nineteenth century. We can trace this development in the hymns of Watts, Wesley, and Cowper; in the nature poetry of James Thomson; in the shifting interest from classical subjects to national folklore traditions by Gray, Collins, and Macpherson; until pure lyric poetry of the personal, subjective type blazes up once more in Blake and Burns.

JOSEPH ADDISON (1672-1719)

HYMN

The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
Their great Original proclaim.
Th' unwearied sun from day to day 5
Does his Creator's power display;
And publishes to every land
The work of an Almighty hand.

Hymn. This poem has the dignity and poise which are characteristic of eighteenth-century verse at its best.

Soon as the evening shades prevail,
The Moon takes up the wondrous tale;
And nightly to the listening earth 11
Repeats the story of her birth;
Whilst all the stars that round her burn,
And all the planets in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll, 15
And spread the truth from pole to pole.

What though in solemn silence all
Move round the dark terrestrial ball;
What though no real voice nor sound
Amidst their radiant orbs be found? 20
In Reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice;
Forever singing as they shine,
"The Hand that made us is divine."
(1712)

ALEXANDER POPE (1688-1744)

RISE, CROWNED WITH LIGHT

Rise, crowned with light, imperial Salem, rise!
Exalt thy towering head and lift thine eyes!
See heaven its sparkling portals wide display,
And break upon thee in a flood of day.

Rise, Crowned with Light. An arrangement for a hymn made from Pope's *Messiah*, itself a free adaptation of the Fourth Eclogue of Vergil. Pope's poetry did not adapt itself well to music. 1. **Salem**, meaning "peace," a name for Jerusalem.

See a long race thy spacious courts adorn;
See future sons and daughters yet unborn,
In crowding ranks on every side arise,
Demanding life, impatient for the skies.

See barbarous nations at thy gates attend,
Walk in thy light, and in thy temple bend;
See thy bright altars thronged with prostrate kings,
While every land its joyous tribute brings.

The seas shall waste, the skies to smoke decay,
Rocks fall to dust, and mountains melt away;
But fixed His word, His saving power remains;
Thy realm shall last, thy own Messiah reigns. (1712)

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

Father of all! in ev'ry age,
In ev'ry clime adored,
By saint, by savage, and by sage,
Jehovah, Jove, or Lord!

Thou Great First Cause, least understood,
Who all my sense confined
To know but this, that thou art good,
And that myself am blind;

Yet gave me, in this dark estate,
To see the good from ill;
And binding nature fast in fate,
Left free the human will.

What conscience dictates to be done,
Or warns me not to do;
This teach me more than hell to shun,
That more than heaven pursue.

What blessings thy free bounty gives
Let me not cast away;
For God is paid when man receives;
T' enjoy is to obey.

Yet not to earth's contracted span
Thy goodness let me bound,
Or think thee Lord alone of man,
When thousand worlds are round.

Let not this weak, unknowing hand
Presume thy bolts to throw,
And deal damnation round the land
On which I judge thy foe.

If I am right, thy grace impart,
Still in the right to stay;
If I am wrong, O teach my heart
To find that better way.

Save me alike from foolish pride
Or impious discontent,
At aught thy wisdom has denied,
Or aught thy goodness lent.

Teach me to feel another's woe,
To hide the fault I see;
That mercy I to others show,
That mercy show to me.

Mean though I am, not wholly so,
Since quickened by thy breath,
O lead me, whereso'er I go,
Through this day's life or death!

This day be bread and peace my lot;
All else beneath the sun
Thou know'st if best bestowed or not,
And let thy will be done.

To Thee, whose temple is all space,
Whose altar earth, sea, skies,
One chorus let all being raise,
All nature's incense rise! (1738)

HENRY CAREY (c. 1693-1743)

SALLY IN OUR ALLEY

Of all the girls that are so smart
There's none like pretty Sally;
She is the darling of my heart,
And she lives in our alley.

Sally in Our Alley. Not all eighteenth-century poetic humor was satiric, for many charmingly humorous poems, like this one, were written, and the type continued into the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, though with a stronger infusion of the narrative element, as in "Duncan Gray" by Burns, and "The Courtin'" by Lowell.

There is no lady in the land 5
  Is half so sweet as Sally;
She is the darling of my heart,
  And she lives in our alley.

Her father he makes cabbage-nets,
  And through the streets does cry 'em;
Her mother she sells laces long 11
  To such as please to buy 'em.
But sure such folks could ne'er beget
  So sweet a girl as Sally!
She is the darling of my heart, 15
  And she lives in our alley.

When she is by, I leave my work,
  I love her so sincerely;
My master comes like any Turk,
  And bangs me most severely. 20
But let him bang his bellyful,
  I'll bear it all for Sally;
She is the darling of my heart,
  And she lives in our alley.

Of all the days that's in the week 25
  I dearly love but one day—
And that's the day that comes betwixt
  A Saturday and Monday;
For then I'm drest all in my best
  To walk abroad with Sally; 30
She is the darling of my heart,
  And she lives in our alley.

My master carries me to church,
  And often am I blaméd
Because I leave him in the lurch 35
  As soon as text is naméd;
I leave the church in sermon-time
  And slink away to Sally;
She is the darling of my heart,
  And she lives in our alley. 40

When Christmas comes about again,
  Oh, then I shall have money;
I'll hoard it up, and box it all,
  I'll give it to my honey.
I would it were ten thousand pound, 45
  I'd give it all to Sally;
She is the darling of my heart,
  And she lives in our alley.

My master and the neighbors all
  Make game of me and Sally, 50
And, but for her, I'd better be
  A slave and row a galley;
But when my seven long years are out,
  Oh, then I'll marry Sally;
Oh, then we'll wed, and then we'll bed—
  But not in our alley! (1713)

*ISAAC WATTS (1674-1748)

O GOD, OUR HELP IN AGES PAST

O God, our help in ages past,
  Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
  And our eternal home—

Under the shadow of thy throne, 5
  Thy saints have dwelt secure;
Sufficient is thine arm alone,
  And our defense is sure.

Before the hills in order stood,
  Or earth received her frame, 10
From everlasting thou art God,
  To endless years the same.

A thousand ages in thy sight
  Are like an evening gone;
Short as the watch that ends the night
  Before the rising sun. 16

Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
  Bears all its sons away;
They fly forgotten, as a dream
  Dies at the opening day. 20

O God, our help in ages past,
  Our hope for years to come,
Be thou our guard while troubles last,
  And our eternal home! (1719)

THE DAY OF JUDGMENT

When the fierce Northwind with his airy forces
Rears up the Baltic to a foaming fury,
And the red lightning with a storm of hail comes
  Rushing amain down—

*Ill-health caused this Protestant minister to withdraw from active work. Out of the quiet came the expression of strong religious faith in his hymns.

How the poor sailors stand amazed and tremble, 5
While the hoarse thunder, like a bloody trumpet,
Roars a loud onset to the gaping waters
Quick to devour them.

Such shall the noise be, and the wild disorder
(If things eternal may be like these earthly), 10
Such the dire terror when the great Archangel
Shakes the creation;

Tears the strong pillars of the vault of heaven,
Breaks up old marble, the repose of princes,
Sees the graves open, and the bones arising, 15
Flames all around them.

Hark, the shrill outcries of the guilty wretches!
Lively bright horror and amazing anguish
Stare through their eyelids, while the living worm lies
Gnawing within them. 20

Thoughts, like old vultures, prey upon their heartstrings,
And the smart twinges, when the eye beholds the
Lofty Judge frowning, and a flood of vengeance
Rolling afore him.

Hopeless immortals! how they scream and shiver, 25
While devils push them to the pit wide-yawning
Hideous and gloomy, to receive them headlong
Down to the center!

Stop here, my fancy! (All away, ye horrid
Doleful ideas!) Come, arise to Jesus, 30
How he sits God-like! and the saints around him
Throned, yet adoring!

11. **Archangel.** The angel Gabriel is supposed to blow the trumpet which will usher in the end of the world.

O may I sit there when he comes triumphant,
Dooming the nations! then ascend to glory,
While our Hosannas all along the passage
Shout the Redeemer. (1719)

JAMES THOMSON (1700-1748)

RULE, BRITANNIA: AN ODE

FROM ALFRED, A MASQUE

When Britain first, at Heaven's command,
Arose from out the azure main,
This was the charter of the land,
And guardian angels sang this strain:
Rule, Britannia, rule the waves! 5
Britons never will be slaves!

The nations not so blest as thee
Must in their turns to tyrants fall,
Whilst thou shalt flourish great and free,
The dread and envy of them all. 10
Rule, Britannia, etc.

Still more majestic shalt thou rise,
More dreadful from each foreign stroke;
As the loud blast that tears the skies
Serves but to root thy native oak. 15
Rule, Britannia, etc.

Thee haughty tyrants ne'er shall tame;
All their attempts to bend thee down
Will but arouse thy generous flame,
But work their woe and thy renown. 20
Rule, Britannia, etc.

Rule, Britannia. In the sixteenth century the English developed a conscious patriotic, national life; in the seventeenth century they were torn by civil war; in the eighteenth century they were content to record their earlier patriotism in literature. It is strange that a Scotch poet of nature, who was no warrior, should have helped to crystallize English patriotism by this poem. "Rule Britannia" was followed by a long line of patriotic poems. Cf. "Ye Mariners of England" (page 475), "England, My England" (page 602), "Recessional" (page 609) and "For All We Have and Are" (page 612), not to speak of poems written during the World War by Sassoon, McRae, Brooke, Gibson, and Noyes. It is significant that in American literature while few patriotic poems have been written as the result of foreign wars, many have been written about America at peace. Much of Whitman expresses the soul of the nation, as "I Hear America Singing" (page 658); and the same may be said for much of Sandburg, though his work reveals a section of the country, rather than the country as a whole. Cf. "Chicago" (page 708) and "Smoke and Steel" (page 709).

To thee belongs the rural reign;
  Thy cities shall with commerce shine;
All thine shall be the subject main,
  And every shore it circles thine. 25
    Rule, Britannia, etc.

The Muses, still with freedom found,
  Shall to thy happy coast repair;
Blest isle, with matchless beauty crowned,
  And manly hearts to guard the fair!
    Rule, Britannia, etc. (1740)

THOMAS GRAY (1716-1771)

ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
  The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
  And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight, 5
  And all the air a solemn stillness holds
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
  And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower
  The moping owl does to the moon complain 10

Elegy. The poetic development of Gray epitomizes the history of eighteenth-century lyric poetry. In form he confined himself almost exclusively to classical models —the ode and the elegy. His first period was classical, his second was transitional, and his third was romantic. The "Elegy" is the most significant poem of his transitional period, for in it Gray took the general reflective type of elegy popular in his day and applied it directly to English life. There is still the neo-classical love for concise and quotable thoughts, but Gray introduced genuine personal emotion. The turning point is apparent in the changes which Gray made in the fifteenth stanza, where he replaced the classical names of Cato, Tully (Cicero), and Caesar by the English Hampden, Milton, and Cromwell. Once more the balance swings back from foreign to national influence. The odes of the third period are still classical in form, but their content represents Gray's reading of Norse and early English sagas; "The Bard" (page 419) as well as "The Fatal Sisters" (page 422) are highly imaginative creations of the spirit of the early English heroic age. Even as Gray swung away from classical and foreign subjects to English and national subjects, so English lyric poetry swung, toward the end of the eighteenth century.

Of such, as wandering near her secret bower,
  Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
  Where heaves the turf in many a mold'ring heap,
Each in his narrow cell forever laid, 15
  The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,
  The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
  No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed. 20

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
  Or busy housewife ply her evening care;
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
  Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield; 25
  Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;
How jocund did they drive their team afield!
  How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
  Their homely joys, and destiny obscure; 30
Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile,
  The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
  And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Awaits alike th' inevitable hour. 35
  The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

26. **glebe**, soil.

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault,
If memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise. 40

Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can honor's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or flattery soothe the dull, cold ear of death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid 45
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands that the rod of empire might have swayed,
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.

But knowledge to their eyes her ample page
Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll; 50
Chill penury repressed their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark, unfathomed caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen, 55
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village Hampden, that with dauntless breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood;
Some mute, inglorious Milton here may rest;
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood. 60

The applause of listening senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their history in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbade; nor circumscribed alone 65
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined;
Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame, 70
Or heap the shrine of luxury and pride
With incense kindled at the muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learned to stray;
Along the cool, sequestered vale of life 75
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect,
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rimes and shapeless sculpture decked,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh. 80

Their name, their years, spelt by th' unlettered muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply;
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who to dumb forgetfulness a prey, 85
This pleasing anxious being e'er resigned,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind?

41. storied, carved with an epitaph or relief. **51. rage,** poetical genius. **52. genial,** conducive to genius.

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires; 90
Ev'n from the tomb the voice of nature cries,
Ev'n in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who mindful of th' unhonored dead
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate,
If chance, by lonely contemplation led, 95
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say:
"Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn. 100

"There at the foot of yonder nodding beech
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn, 105
Muttering his wayward fancies he would rove,
Now drooping, woeful wan, like one forlorn,
Or crazed with care, or crossed in hopeless love.

"One morn I missed him on the customed hill,
Along the heath and near his favorite tree; 110
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;

"The next with dirges due in sad array
Slow through the church-way path we saw him borne.
Approach and read (for thou can'st read) the lay, 115
Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn."

THE EPITAPH

Here rests his head upon the lap of earth,
A youth to fortune and to fame unknown.
Fair science frowned not on his humble birth,
And melancholy marked him for her own. 120

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
Heaven did a recompense as largely send.
He gave to misery, all he had, a tear,
He gained from Heaven ('twas all he wished) a friend.

No farther seek his merits to disclose, 125
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode.
(There they alike in trembling hope repose),
The bosom of his Father and his God.

c. 1742-1750 (1751)

HYMN TO ADVERSITY

Daughter of Jove, relentless power,
Thou tamer of the human breast,
Whose iron scourge and torturing hour
The bad affright, afflict the best!
Bound in thy adamantine chain, 5
The proud are taught to taste of pain,
And purple tyrants vainly groan
With pangs unfelt before, unpitied and alone.

When first thy sire to send on earth
Virtue, his darling child, designed, 10
To thee he gave the heavenly birth,

98 ff. **Oft have, etc.** The melancholy of this passage is a point of union between eighteenth-century elegiac poetry and nineteenth-century romantic poetry. Byron and Poe imagined themselves to be like this young poet.

Hymn to Adversity. Though published during his second period, this hymn, or ode, is typical of the classical point of view of the eighteenth century and of Gray's first poetic period. However, Gray has vitalized it from his own experience. 7. **purple tyrants.** Purple was the color reserved for the Roman emperors. Hence it became a sign of royalty.

And bade to form her infant mind.
Stern, rugged nurse! thy rigid lore
With patience many a year she bore.
What sorrow was, thou bad'st her know,
And from her own she learned to melt
at others' woe. 16

Scared at thy frown terrific, fly
Self-pleasing Folly's idle brood,
Wild Laughter, Noise, and thoughtless Joy,
And leave us leisure to be good. 20
Light they disperse, and with them go
The summer friend, the flattering foe;
By vain Prosperity received,
To her they vow their truth, and are
again believed.

Wisdom in sable garb arrayed, 25
Immersed in rapturous thought profound,
And Melancholy, silent maid,
With leaden eye that loves the ground,
Still on thy solemn steps attend;
Warm Charity, the general friend, 30
With Justice, to herself severe,
And Pity, dropping soft the sadly-pleasing tear.

Oh! gently on thy suppliant's head,
Dread goddess, lay thy chastening hand!
Not in thy Gorgon terrors clad, 35
Not circled with the vengeful band
(As by the impious thou art seen)
With thundering voice, and threatening mien,
With screaming Horror's funeral cry,
Despair, and fell Disease, and ghastly
Poverty. 40

Thy form benign, O goddess, wear,
Thy milder influence impart,
Thy philosophic train be there
To soften, not to wound, my heart.
The generous spark extinct revive, 45
Teach me to love and to forgive,
Exact my own defects to scan,
What others are, to feel, and know myself
a Man. (1753)

17-32. **Scared**, etc. Notice in these two stanzas the influence upon Gray of Milton's "Il Penseroso." 35. **Gorgon.** The Gorgons were three Greek mythological sisters of terrifying aspect. Medusa, the only mortal one of the three, turned all beholders to stone.

THE BARD

A PINDARIC ODE

I. 1

"Ruin seize thee, ruthless king!
Confusion on thy banners wait;
Though fanned by conquest's crimson wing,
They mock the air with idle state.
Helm, nor hauberk's twisted mail, 5
Nor even thy virtues, tyrant, shall
avail
To save thy secret soul from nightly
fears,
From Cambria's curse, from Cambria's tears!"
Such were the sounds that o'er the
crested pride
Of the first Edward scattered wild
dismay, 10
As down the steep of Snowdon's
shaggy side
He wound with toilsome march his
long array.
Stout Gloucester stood aghast in
speechless trance;
"To arms!" cried Mortimer, and couched
his quivering lance.

I. 2

On a rock, whose haughty brow 15
Frowns o'er old Conway's foaming
flood,
Robed in the sable garb of woe,
With haggard eyes the poet stood
(Loose his beard and hoary hair
Streamed, like a meteor, to the
troubled air), 20
And with a master's hand and prophet's fire
Struck the deep sorrows of his lyre:
"Hark how each giant oak and desert
cave
Sighs to the torrent's awful voice
beneath!
O'er thee, O king! their hundred arms
they wave, 25

The Bard. "The following ode is founded on a tradition, current in Wales, that Edward the First, when he completed the conquest of that country, ordered all the bards that fell into his hands to be put to death" (Gray). The names of the Welsh bards belong chiefly to tradition. 5. **hauberk**, coat of mail. 8. **Cambria**, Wales. 11. **Snowdon**, the highest mountain in Wales.

Revenge on thee in hoarser murmurs breathe,
Vocal no more, since Cambria's fatal day,
To highborn Hoel's harp or soft Llewellyn's lay.

I. 3

"Cold is Cadwallo's tongue,
That hushed the stormy main; 30
Brave Urien sleeps upon his craggy bed;
Mountains, ye mourn in vain
Modred, whose magic song
Made huge Plinlimmon bow his cloud-topped head.
On dreary Arvon's shore they lie,
Smeared with gore and ghastly pale; 36
Far, far aloof th' affrighted ravens sail;
The famished eagle screams, and passes by.
Dear lost companions of my tuneful art,
Dear as the light that visits these sad eyes, 40
Dear as the ruddy drops that warm my heart,
Ye died amidst your dying country's cries—
No more I weep; they do not sleep!
On yonder cliffs, a grisly band,
I see them sit; they linger yet 45
Avengers of their native land;
With me in dreadful harmony they join,
And weave with bloody hands the tissue of thy line.

II. 1

"Weave the warp and weave the woof,
The winding-sheet of Edward's race; 50
Give ample room and verge enough
The characters of hell to trace.

34. **Plinlimmon**, a mountain in Wales. 35. **Arvon's shore**, "the shores of Caernarvonshire opposite Anglesey" (Gray). 49. **Weave the warp**, etc., a reference to the web of fate woven usually by the Scandinavian Norns, the equivalent of the Greek Fates.

Mark the year, and mark the night,
When Severn shall reëcho with affright
The shrieks of death through Berkley's roofs that ring, 55
Shrieks of an agonizing king!
She-wolf of France, with unrelenting fangs,
That tear'st the bowels of thy mangled mate,
From thee be born who o'er thy country hangs
The scourge of Heaven; what terrors round him wait! 60
Amazement in his van, with Flight combined,
And Sorrow's faded form, and Solitude behind.

II. 2

"Mighty victor, mighty lord!
Low on his funeral couch he lies;
No pitying heart, no eye, afford 65
A tear to grace his obsequies.
Is the Sable Warrior fled?
Thy son is gone; he rests among the dead.
The swarm that in thy noontide beam were born?
Gone to salute the rising morn. 70
Fair laughs the morn and soft the zephyr blows,
While, proudly riding o'er the azure realm,
In gallant trim the gilded vessel goes,
Youth on the prow, and Pleasure at the helm,
Regardless of the sweeping Whirlwind's sway, 75
That, hushed in grim repose, expects his evening prey.

II. 3

"Fill high the sparkling bowl,
The rich repast prepare;

56. **king**, Edward II, murdered by an insurrection of his nobles in 1377. 57. **She-wolf**, Isabella of France, queen to Edward II, who was supposed to have intrigued against her husband with Mortimer. 59. **be born who**. Edward III was her son. 63. **Mighty victor**, Edward III (1327-1377), king of England. 67. **Sable Warrior**, the Black Prince. 68. **son**, Richard II.

Reft of a crown, he yet may share the feast.
Close by the regal chair 80
Fell Thirst and Famine scowl
A baleful smile upon their baffled guest.
Heard ye the din of battle bray,
Lance to lance, and horse to horse?
Long years of havoc urge their destined course, 85
And through the kindred squadrons mow their way.
Ye towers of Julius, London's lasting shame,
With many a foul and midnight murther fed,
Revere his consort's faith, his father's fame,
And spare the meek usurper's holy head! 90
Above, below, the rose of snow,
Twined with her blushing foe, we spread;
The bristled Boar in infant gore
Wallows beneath thy thorny shade.
Now, brothers, bending o'er th' accurséd loom, 95
Stamp we our vengeance deep, and ratify his doom!

III. 1

"Edward, lo! to sudden fate
(Weave we the woof. The thread is spun.)
Half of thy heart we consecrate.
(The web is wove. The work is done.) 100
Stay, oh, stay! nor thus forlorn
Leave me unblest, unpitied, here to mourn!
In yon bright track, that fires the western skies,
They melt, they vanish from my eyes.
But, oh! what solemn scenes on Snowdon's height, 105
Descending slow, their glittering skirts unroll?
Visions of glory, spare my aching sight!
Ye unborn ages, crowd not on my soul!
No more our long-lost Arthur we bewail:
All hail, ye genuine kings, Britannia's issue, hail! 110

III. 2

"Girt with many a baron bold,
Sublime their starry fronts they rear;
And gorgeous dames, and statesmen old
In bearded majesty appear.
In the midst a form divine! 115
Her eye proclaims her of the Briton line;
Her lion-port, her awe-commanding face,
Attempered sweet to virgin-grace.
What strings symphonious tremble in the air,
What strains of vocal transport round her play! 120
Hear from the grave, great Taliessin, hear;
They breathe a soul to animate thy clay.
Bright Rapture calls, and, soaring as she sings,
Waves in the eye of heaven her many-colored wings.

III. 3

"The verse adorn again 125
Fierce War and faithful Love
And Truth severe, by fairy Fiction dressed.
In buskined measures move
Pale Grief and pleasing Pain,
With Horror, tyrant of the throbbing breast. 130
A voice, as of the cherub choir,

85. **Long years**, etc., the Wars of the Roses, in the reign of Henry VI. 87. **Ye towers of Julius.** The Tower of London is often spoken of as having been begun by Julius Caesar. 89. **consort**, Margaret of Anjou, wife of Henry VI. **father**, Henry V. 90. **meek usurper.** Henry VI was very pious. The Lancastrian House to which he belonged had no valid claim to the crown. 91-92. **rose of snow . . . blushing foe**, an allusion to the attempt to secure peace between the Lancastrian party, whose symbol was the red rose, and the Yorkist party, whose symbol was the white rose. 93. **bristled Boar**, one of the insignia of Richard III. **infant gore**, a reference to the murder of the little princes in the Tower. 99. **Half of thy heart.** Eleanor of Castile, wife of Edward I, died shortly after the conquest of Wales. Once when her husband was wounded with a poisoned sword she sucked out the poison.

115. **form divine**, Queen Elizabeth, whose grandfather, Henry VII, was of Welsh descent. 125-130. **The verse**, etc., a reference to Spenser and Shakespeare. 131-134. **A voice**, etc., a reference to Milton and his successors.

Gales from blooming Eden bear;
And distant warblings lessen on my ear,
That, lost in long futurity, expire.
Fond, impious man, think'st thou yon sanguine cloud, 135
Raised by thy breath, has quenched the orb of day?
Tomorrow he repairs the golden flood,
And warms the nations with redoubled ray.
Enough for me; with joy I see
The different doom our Fates assign. 140
Be thine Despair and sceptered Care;
To triumph and to die are mine."
He spoke, and headlong from the mountain's height
Deep in the roaring tide he plunged to endless night. (1757)

THE FATAL SISTERS

AN ODE FROM THE NORSE TONGUE

Now the storm begins to lower
(Haste, the loom of hell prepare);
Iron-sleet of arrowy shower
Hurtles in the darkened air.

Glitt'ring lances are the loom, 5
Where the dusky warp we strain,
Weaving many a soldier's doom,
Orkney's woe, and Randver's bane.

See the grisly texture grow
('Tis of human entrails made), 10
And the weights, that play below,
Each a gasping warrior's head.

Shafts for shuttles, dipped in gore,
Shoot the trembling cords along.
Sword, that once a monarch bore, 15
Keep the tissue close and strong.

Mista black, terrific maid,
Sangrida, and Hilda see,
Join the wayward work to aid;
'Tis the woof of victory. 20

Ere the ruddy sun be set,
Pikes must shiver, javelins sing,
Blade with clattering buckler meet,
Hauberk crash, and helmet ring.

(Weave the crimson web of war.) 25
Let us go, and let us fly,
Where our friends the conflict share,
Where they triumph, where they die.

As the paths of fate we tread,
Wading through th' ensanguined field, 30
Gondula, and Geira, spread
O'er the youthful king your shield.

We the reins to slaughter give,
Ours to kill, and ours to spare;
Spite of danger he shall live. 35
(Weave the crimson web of war.)

They, whom once the desert-beach
Pent within its bleak domain,
Soon their ample sway shall stretch
O'er the plenty of the plain. 40

Low the dauntless earl is laid,
Gored with many a gaping wound.
Fate demands a nobler head;
Soon a king shall bite the ground.

Long his loss shall Eirin weep; 45
Ne'er again his likeness see.
Long her strains in sorrow steep,
Strains of immortality!

Horror covers all the heath;
Clouds of carnage blot the sun. 50

135. **Fond**, foolish.

The Fatal Sisters. An adaptation of a Norse poem commemorating the battle of Clontarf, 1014, where two Norse heroes—Sictrygg and Sigurd, the latter the Earl of the Orkney Islands—invaded Ireland and fought with Brian, King of Dublin. Sigurd and Brian were slain. The poem describes the Valkyries—the daughters of Odin—as weaving from human entrails the web of fate before the battle (the three Norns [Fates] usually weave this web). During the battle the Valkyries ride among the slain and carry to Valhalla, Odin's hall, the most heroic champions, who are resuscitated and live ever after in bliss. A change had come over the eighteenth century, to be able to relish such stark realistic details and such a conception. Thereafter English poetry, through Macpherson, Percy, Burns, and Scott, reclaimed her past traditions in Anglo-Saxon, Celtic, and medieval literature, and did not imitate neo-classical poetry. In America, likewise, the poets of the twentieth century have followed Whitman rather than the more conservative poets of New England and the South. 8. **Randver**, an unknown allusion.

17 ff. **Mista, etc.** The names are those of Valkyries. 32. **king**, probably Sictrygg. 40. **plain.** The Norse lived on a bleak coast, as described in *Beowulf*. They were now to possess the fertile north of Ireland. 41. **earl**, Sigurd. 44. **king**, Brian. 45. **Eirin**, Ireland.

Sisters, weave the web of death;
Sisters, cease, the work is done.

Hail the task, and hail the hands!
Songs of joy and triumph sing!
Joy to the victorious bands; 55
Triumph to the younger king.

Mortal, thou that hear'st the tale,
Learn the tenor of our song.
Scot and, through each winding vale
Far and wide the notes prolong. 60

Sisters hence with spurs of speed;
Each her thundering falchion wield;
Each bestride her sable steed.
Hurry, hurry to the field.

(1768)

*WILLIAM COLLINS (1721-1759)

A SONG FROM SHAKESPEARE'S CYMBELINE

SUNG BY GUIDERUS AND ARVIRAGUS OVER FIDELE, SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD

To fair Fidele's grassy tomb
Soft maids and village hinds shall bring
Each op'ning sweet, of earliest bloom,
And rifle all the breathing spring.

No wailing ghost shall dare appear, 5
To vex with shrieks this quiet grove;
But shepherd lads assemble here,
And melting virgins own their love.

No withered witch shall here be seen,
No goblins lead their nightly crew; 10
The female fays shall haunt the green,
And dress thy grave with pearly dew.

The redbreast oft at ev'ning hours
Shall kindly lend his little aid,
With hoary moss, and gathered flow'rs, 15
To deck the ground where thou art laid.

*Many critics believe this shy poet to be Gray's equal as a lyric writer. Certainly no one else rivaled him in this century, except Blake and Burns. Notice the return of Celtic folklore, as well as his simple, tender love of nature. Cf. Shakespeare's original dirge, "Fear No More the Heat O' the Sun" (page 369). 2. **hinds**, rustics. 11. **fays**, fairies.

When howling winds and beating rain
In tempests shake the silvan cell,
Or midst the chase on ev'ry plain,
The tender thought on thee shall dwell, 20

Each lonely scene shall thee restore;
For thee the tear be duly shed;
Beloved, till life could charm no more,
And mourned, till Pity's self be dead.

(1744)

ODE

WRITTEN IN THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR 1746

How sleep the brave who sink to rest
By all their country's wishes blest!
When Spring, with dewy fingers cold,
Returns to deck their hallowed mold,
She there shall dress a sweeter sod 5
Than Fancy's feet have ever trod.

By fairy hands their knell is rung;
By forms unseen their dirge is sung.
There Honor comes, a pilgrim gray,
To bless the turf that wraps their clay; 10
And Freedom shall awhile repair,
To dwell a weeping hermit there!

ODE TO EVENING

If aught of oaten stop, or pastoral song,
May hope, chaste Eve, to soothe thy modest ear,
Like thy own solemn springs,
Thy springs and dying gales;

O nymph reserved—while now the bright-haired sun 5
Sits in yon western tent, whose cloudy skirts,
With brede ethereal wove,
O'erhang his wavy bed;

Now air is hushed, save where the weak-eyed bat
With short shrill shriek flits by on leathern wing, 10
Or where the beetle winds
His small but sullen horn,

Ode to Evening. 7. **brede**, embroidery. 11. **Or where**, etc. Cf. "The Elegy" (page 416).

As oft he rises, 'midst the twilight path
Against the pilgrim borne in heedless hum—
Now teach me, maid composed, 15
To breathe some softened strain,

Whose numbers, stealing through thy darkening vale,
May not unseemly with its stillness suit,
As, musing slow, I hail
Thy genial loved return! 20

For when thy folding-star arising shows
His paly circlet, at his warning lamp
The fragrant Hours, and elves
Who slept in buds the day,

And many a nymph who wreathes her brows with sedge, 25
And sheds the freshening dew, and, lovelier still,
The pensive Pleasures sweet,
Prepare thy shadowy car.

Then lead, calm votaress, where some sheety lake
Cheers the lone heath, or some time-hallowed pile, 30
Or upland fallows gray
Reflect its last cool gleam.

But when chill blustering winds, or driving rain,
Prevent my willing feet, be mine the hut
That from the mountain's side 35
Views wilds and swelling floods,

And hamlets brown, and dim-discovered spires,
And hears their simple bell, and marks o'er all
Thy dewy fingers draw
The gradual dusky veil. 40

While Spring shall pour his show'rs, as oft he wont,
And bathe thy breathing tresses, meekest Eve!
While Summer loves to sport
Beneath thy lingering light;

While sallow Autumn fills thy lap with leaves, 45
Or Winter, yelling through the troublous air,
Affrights thy shrinking train,
And rudely rends thy robes;

So long, regardful of thy quiet rule,
Shall Fancy, Friendship, Science, rose-lipped Health, 50
Thy gentlest influence own,
And hymn thy favorite name!

(1746)

41. **wont**, is accustomed.

THE PASSIONS

AN ODE FOR MUSIC

When Music, heavenly maid, was young,
While yet in early Greece she sung,
The Passions oft, to hear her shell,
Thronged around her magic cell, 4
Exulting, trembling, raging, fainting,
Possessed beyond the Muse's painting;
By turns they felt the glowing mind
Disturbed, delighted, raised, refined;
Till once, 'tis said, when all were fired,
Filled with fury, rapt, inspired, 20
From the supporting myrtles round
They snatched her instruments of sound;
And as they oft had heard apart
Sweet lessons of her forceful art,
Each, for madness ruled the hour, 15
Would prove his own expressive power.

First Fear his hand, its skill to try,
Amid the chords bewildered laid,
And back recoiled, he knew not why,
Ev'n at the sound himself had made. 20

Next Anger rushed; his eyes, on fire,
In lightnings owned his secret stings;
In one rude clash he struck the lyre,
And swept with hurried hand the strings.

With woeful measures wan Despair 25
Low sullen sounds his grief beguiled;
A solemn, strange, and mingled air;
'Twas sad by fits, by starts 'twas wild.

But thou, O Hope, with eyes so fair,
What was thy delightful measure? 30
Still it whispered promised pleasure,

The Passions. Contrast with "Alexander's Feast" (page 409). 3. **shell**, lyre. According to legend, the first lyre was made by stretching strings along a large tortoise-shell.

And bade the lovely scenes at distance hail!
Still would her touch the strain prolong,
And from the rocks, the woods, the vale,
She called on Echo still through all the song; 35
And where her sweetest theme she chose,
A soft responsive voice was heard at ev'ry close,
And Hope enchanted smiled, and waved her golden hair.

And longer had she sung—but with a frown
Revenge impatient rose; 40
He threw his blood-stained sword in thunder down
And with a with'ring look
The war-denouncing trumpet took,
And blew a blast so loud and dread,
Were ne'er prophetic sounds so full of woe. 45
And ever and anon he beat
The doubling drum with furious heat;
And though sometimes, each dreary pause between,
Dejected Pity, at his side,
Her soul-subduing voice applied, 50
Yet still he kept his wild unaltered mien,
While each strained ball of sight seemed bursting from his head.

Thy numbers, Jealousy, to nought were fixed,
Sad proof of thy distressful state;
Of diff'ring themes the veering song was mixed, 55
And now it courted Love, now raving called on Hate.

With eyes upraised, as one inspired,
Pale Melancholy sate retired,
And from her wild sequestered seat,
In notes by distance made more sweet, 60
Poured through the mellow horn her pensive soul;
And, dashing soft from rocks around,
Bubbling runnels joined the sound;
Through glades and glooms the mingled measure stole;
Or o'er some haunted stream with fond delay 65
Round an holy calm diffusing,
Love of peace and lonely musing,
In hollow murmurs died away.

But oh, how altered was its sprightlier tone,
When Cheerfulness, a nymph of healthiest hue, 70
Her bow across her shoulder flung,
Her buskins gemmed with morning dew,
Blew an inspiring air, that dale and thicket rung,
The hunter's call to faun and dryad known!
The oak-crowned sisters, and their chaste-eyed queen, 75
Satyrs, and silvan boys, were seen,
Peeping from forth their alleys green;
Brown Exercise rejoiced to hear,
And Sport leaped up, and seized his beechen spear.

Last came Joy's ecstatic trial. 80
He, with viny crown advancing,
First to the lively pipe his hand addrest;
But soon he saw the brisk awak'ning viol,
Whose sweet entrancing voice he loved the best.
They would have thought, who heard the strain, 85
They saw in Tempe's vale her native maids
Amidst the vestal sounding shades,
To some unwearied minstrel dancing;
While, as his flying fingers kissed the strings,
Love framed with Mirth a gay fantastic round; 90
Loose were her tresses seen, her zone unbound,
And he, amidst his frolic play,
As if he would the charming air repay,
Shook thousand odors from his dewy wings.

63. **runnels**, rills.

86. **Tempe's vale**, a valley in northern Greece, near Olympus. It was supposed to be the haunt of the Muses.

O Music, sphere-descended maid, 95
Friend of Pleasure, Wisdom's aid,
Why, goddess, why, to us denied,
Lay'st thou thy ancient lyre aside?
As in that loved Athenian bow'r 99
You learned an all-commanding pow'r
Thy mimic soul, O nymph endeared,
Can well recall what then it heard.
Where is thy native simple heart,
Devote to Virtue, Fancy, Art?
Arise as in that elder time, 105
Warm, energic, chaste, sublime!
Thy wonders, in that godlike age,
Fill thy recording sister's page.—
'Tis said, and I believe the tale,
Thy humblest reed could more prevail, 110
Had more of strength, diviner rage,
Than all which charms this laggard age,
Ev'n all at once together found,
Cecilia's mingled world of sound.
Oh, bid our vain endeavors cease, 115
Revive the just designs of Greece,
Return in all thy simple state,
Confirm the tales her sons relate!

(1746)

*WILLIAM COWPER (1731-1800)

From OLNEY HYMNS

WALKING WITH GOD

GENESIS V, 24

Oh! for a closer walk with God,
A calm and heavenly frame;
A light to shine upon the road
That leads me to the Lamb!

Where is the blessedness I knew 5
When first I saw the Lord?
Where is the soul-refreshing view
Of Jesus and his word?

What peaceful hours I once enjoyed!
How sweet their memory still! 10
But they have left an aching void
The world can never fill.

Return, O holy Dove, return,
Sweet messenger of rest!
I hate the sins that made thee mourn 15
And drove thee from my breast.

The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be,
Help me to tear it from thy throne,
And worship only thee. 20

So shall my walk be close with God,
Calm and serene my frame;
So purer light shall mark the road
That leads me to the Lamb. (1779)

From OLNEY HYMNS

GOD MOVES IN A MYSTERIOUS WAY

God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines, 5
With never-failing skill,
He treasures up his bright designs,
And works his sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds ye so much dread 10
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace;
Behind a frowning providence 15
He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower. 20

Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan his work in vain;
God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain. (1779)

99-102. **As in**, etc., a reference to the golden age of lyric poetry in Greece, especially in Athens. 114. **Cecilia**, etc., probably a reference to Dryden's ode (page 408).
*For Cowper, whose life was clouded by insanity, poetry was a diversion suggested by his friends, the Unwins, with whom he lived at Olney.

ON THE RECEIPT OF MY MOTHER'S PICTURE

Oh, that those lips had language! Life has passed
With me but roughly since I heard thee last.
Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smile I see,
The same that oft in childhood solaced me;
Voice only fails, else how distinct they say, 5
"Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears away!"
The meek intelligence of those dear eyes
(Blest be the art that can immortalize,
The art that baffles Time's tyrannic claim
To quench it) here shines on me still the same. 10
Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,
O welcome guest, though unexpected here!
Who bidst me honor with an artless song,
Affectionate, a mother lost so long,
I will obey, not willingly alone, 15
But gladly, as the precept were her own;
And, while that face renews my filial grief,
Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief,
Shall steep me in Elysian reverie,
A momentary dream that thou art she. 20
My mother! when I learned that thou wast dead,
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?
Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?
Perhaps thou gavest me, though unfelt, a kiss; 25
Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss—
Ah, that maternal smile! It answers—Yes.
I heard the bell tolled on thy burial day;
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,
And turning from my nursery window, drew 30
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!
But was it such?—It was.—Where thou art gone
Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.
May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,
The parting word shall pass my lips no more! 35
Thy maidens, grieved themselves at my concern,
Oft gave me promise of thy quick return.
What ardently I wished I long believed,
And, disappointed still, was still deceived.
By expectation every day beguiled, 40
Dupe of *tomorrow* even from a child.
Thus many a sad tomorrow came and went,
Till, all my stock of infant sorrow spent,
I learned at last submission to my lot;
But, though I less deplored thee, ne'er forgot. 45
Where once we dwelt our name is heard no more;
Children not thine have trod my nursery floor;
And where the gardener Robin, day by day,
Drew me to school along the public way,
Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapped 50
In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet capped,
'Tis now become a history little known,
That once we called the pastoral house our own.
Short-lived possession! but the record fair
That memory keeps, of all thy kindness there, 55
Still outlives many a storm that has effaced
A thousand other themes less deeply traced.

On the Receipt of My Mother's Picture. Cowper's mother died in 1737, when he was six years old. His feeling for her is expressed in the following statement, written over half a century later. "Not a week passes (perhaps I might with equal veracity say a day) in which I do not think of her." He received the picture from his cousin Anne Bodham, in 1788. Cf. "Matri Dilectissimae" (page 601). 19. **Elysian,** heavenly, from the Greek Elysian Fields, the resort of the blessed among the dead.

Thy nightly visits to my chamber made,
That thou mightst know me safe and warmly laid;
Thy morning bounties ere I left my home, 60
The biscuit, or confectionary plum;
The fragrant waters on my cheeks bestowed
By thy own hand, till fresh they shone and glowed;
All this, and more endearing still than all,
Thy constant flow of love, that knew no fall, 65
Ne'er roughened by those cataracts and brakes
That humor interposed too often makes;
All this still legible in memory's page,
And still to be so to my latest age,
Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay 70
Such honors to thee as my numbers may;
Perhaps a frail memorial, but sincere,
Not scorned in heaven, though little noticed here.
Could Time, his flight reversed, restore the hours,
When, playing with thy vesture's tissued flowers, 75
The violet, the pink, and jessamine,
I pricked them into paper with a pin
(And thou wast happier than myself the while,
Wouldst softly speak, and stroke my head and smile),
Could those few pleasant days again appear, 80
Might one wish bring them, would I wish them here?
I would not trust my heart—the dear delight
Seems so to be desired, perhaps I might.—
But no—what here we call our life is such,
So little to be loved, and thou so much, 85
That I should ill requite thee to constrain
Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.
Thou, as a gallant bark from Albion's coast
(The storms all weathered and the ocean crossed)
Shoots into port at some well-havened isle, 90
Where spices breathe, and brighter seasons smile,
There sits quiescent on the floods that show
Her beauteous form reflected clear below,
While airs impregnated with incense play
Around her, fanning light her streamers gay; 95
So thou, with sails how swift! hast reached the shore,
"Where tempests never beat nor billows roar."
And thy loved consort on the dangerous tide
Of life long since has anchored by thy side.
But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest, 100
Always from port withheld, always distressed—
Me howling blasts drive devious, tempest tost,
Sails ripped, seams opening wide, and compass lost,
And day by day some current's thwarting force
Sets me more distant from a prosperous course. 105
Yet, oh, the thought that thou art safe, and he!
That thought is joy, arrive what may to me.
My boast is not that I deduce my birth
From loins enthroned and rulers of the earth;
But higher far my proud pretensions rise— 110
The son of parents passed into the skies!
And now, farewell—Time unrevoked has run
His wonted course, yet what I wished is done.
By contemplation's help, not sought in vain,
I seem to have lived my childhood o'er again; 115

66. **brakes**, rapids or obstacles. 88. **Albion**, England.

100-105. **But me**, etc. Later Cowper was to embody this picture in the autobiographical poem "The Castaway" (page 430).

To have renewed the joys that once were mine,
Without the sin of violating thine.
And, while the wings of Fancy still are free,
And I can view this mimic show of thee,
Time has but half succeeded in his theft— 120
Thyself removed, thy power to soothe me left. (1798)

ON THE LOSS OF THE ROYAL GEORGE

Toll for the brave!
The brave that are no more!
All sunk beneath the wave,
Fast by their native shore!

Eight hundred of the brave, 5
Whose courage well was tried,
Had made the vessel heel,
And laid her on her side.

A land-breeze shook the shrouds,
And she was overset; 10
Down went the Royal George,
With all her crew complete.

Toll for the brave!
Brave Kempenfelt is gone;
His last sea-fight is fought; 15
His work of glory done.

It was not in the battle;
No tempest gave the shock;
She sprang no fatal leak;
She ran upon no rock. 20

His sword was in its sheath;
His fingers held the pen,
When Kempenfelt went down
With twice four hundred men.

Weigh the vessel up, 25
Once dreaded by our foes!
And mingle with our cup
The tears that England owes.

Her timbers yet are sound,
And she may float again 30
Full charged with England's thunder,
And plow the distant main.

But Kempenfelt is gone,
His victories are o'er;
And he and his eight hundred 35
Shall plow the wave no more.
(1803)

On the Loss of the Royal George. Before the days of dry-docks, barnacles were scraped from a ship by heeling her over on one side as far as was safe, and then reversing the process. The *Royal George*, the flagship of Rear Admiral Kempenfelt, capsized in harbor, August 29, 1787, while this process was going on. Both Admiral and crew were drowned. The poem is a dirge, and is included here as a contrast to others, like "The Burial of Sir John Moore" (page 479) and "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington" (page 540).

TO MARY UNWIN

Mary! I want a lyre with other strings;
Such aid from Heaven as some have feigned they drew!
An eloquence scarce given to mortals, new,
And undebased by praise of meaner things!
That, ere through age or woe I shed my wings, 5
I may record thy worth, with honor due,
In verse as musical as thou art true—
Verse, that immortalizes whom it sings!
But thou hast little need; there is a book,
By seraphs writ with beams of heavenly light, 10
On which the eyes of God not rarely look;
A chronicle of actions just and bright!
There all thy deeds, my faithful Mary, shine,
And since thou own'st that praise, I spare thee mine. (1803)

TO MARY

The twentieth year is well-nigh past
Since first our sky was overcast;
Ah, would that this might be the last!
My Mary!

Thy spirits have a fainter flow; 5
I see thee daily weaker grow.
'Twas my distress that brought thee low,
My Mary!

To Mary Unwin. Title. Mary Unwin was the wife of the minister with whom Cowper long resided. She cared for him during his fits of insanity.

Thy needles, once a shining store,
For my sake restless heretofore, 10
Now rust disused, and shine no more,
My Mary!

For though thou gladly wouldst fulfill
The same kind office for me still,
Thy sight now seconds not thy will, 15
My Mary!

But well thou playedst the housewife's part,
And all thy threads with magic art
Have wound themselves about this heart,
My Mary! 20

Thy indistinct expressions seem
Like language uttered in a dream;
Yet me they charm, whate'er the theme,
My Mary!

Thy silver locks, once auburn bright, 25
Are still more lovely in my sight
Than golden beams of orient light,
My Mary!

For, could I view nor them nor thee,
What sight worth seeing could I see? 30
The sun would rise in vain for me,
My Mary!

Partakers of thy sad decline,
Thy hands their little force resign,
Yet, gently pressed, press gently mine,
My Mary! 36

Such feebleness of limbs thou provest,
That now at every step thou movest
Upheld by two, yet still thou lovest,
My Mary! 40

And still to love, though pressed with ill,
In wintry age to feel no chill,
With me is to be lovely still,
My Mary!

But ah! by constant heed I know 45
How oft the sadness that I show
Transforms thy smiles to looks of woe,
My Mary!

And should my future lot be cast
With much resemblance of the past, 50
Thy worn-out heart will break at last,
My Mary! (1803)

THE CASTAWAY

Obscurest night involved the sky,
The Atlantic billows roared,
When such a destined wretch as I,
Washed headlong from on board,
Of friends, of hope, of all bereft, 5
His floating home forever left.

No braver chief could Albion boast
Than he with whom he went,
Nor ever ship left Albion's coast
With warmer wishes sent. 10
He loved them both, but both in vain,
Nor him beheld, nor her again.

Not long beneath the whelming brine,
Expert to swim, he lay;
Nor soon he felt his strength decline, 15
Or courage die away;
But waged with death a lasting strife,
Supported by despair of life.

He shouted; nor his friends had failed
To check the vessel's course, 20
But so the furious blast prevailed,
That, pitiless perforce,
They left their outcast mate behind,
And scudded still before the wind.

Some succor yet they could afford; 25
And such as storms allow,
The cask, the coop, the floated cord,
Delayed not to bestow.
But he (they knew) nor ship nor shore,
Whate'er they gave, should visit more.

Nor, cruel as it seemed, could he 31
Their haste himself condemn,
Aware that flight, in such a sea,
Alone could rescue them;
Yet bitter felt it still to die 35
Deserted, and his friends so nigh.

He long survives, who lives an hour
In ocean, self-upheld;
And so long he, with unspent power,
His destiny repelled; 40

The Castaway. The background for this, the last poem that Cowper wrote, was suggested by an incident he read in Lord George Anson's *Voyage Round the World.* The whole poem, however, symbolizes the poet's feeling of terror and isolation because of his fits of insanity.

And ever, as the minutes flew,
Entreated help, or cried "Adieu!"

At length, his transient respite past,
His comrades, who before
Had heard his voice in every blast, 45
Could catch the sound no more;
For then, by toil subdued, he drank
The stifling wave, and then he sank.

No poet wept him; but the page
Of narrative sincere, 50
That tells his name, his worth, his age,
Is wet with Anson's tear;
And tears by bards or heroes shed
Alike immortalize the dead.

I therefore purpose not, or dream, 55
Descanting on his fate,
To give the melancholy theme
A more enduring date;
But misery still delights to trace
Its semblance in another's case. 60

No voice divine the storm allayed,
No light propitious shone,
When, snatched from all effectual aid,
We perished, each alone;
But I beneath a rougher sea, 65
And whelmed in deeper gulfs than he.

(1803)

*CHARLES WESLEY (1707-1788)

IN TEMPTATION

Jesu, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high!
Hide me, O my Savior, hide, 5
Till the storm of life is past,
Safe into the haven guide;
O receive my soul at last!

Other refuge have I none;
Hangs my helpless soul on thee; 10
Leave, ah! leave me not alone;
Still support and comfort me!
All my trust on thee is stayed,
All my help from thee I bring.
Cover my defenseless head 15
With the shadow of thy wing!

Wilt thou not regard my call?
Wilt thou not accept my prayer?
Lo! I sink, I faint, I fall!
Lo! on thee I cast my care! 20
Reach me out thy gracious hand!
While I of thy strength receive,
Hoping against hope I stand,
Dying, and behold I live!

Thou, O Christ, art all I want; 25
More than all in thee I find.
Raise the fallen, cheer the faint,
Heal the sick, and lead the blind!
Just and holy is thy name;
I am all unrighteousness. 30
False and full of sin I am;
Thou art full of truth and grace.

Plenteous grace with thee is found,
Grace to cover all my sin.
Let the healing streams abound; 35
Make and keep me pure within!
Thou of life the fountain art,
Freely let me take of thee;
Spring thou up within my heart!
Rise to all eternity!

(1740)

*The rise of Methodism among the English country people was effected by the Wesley brothers, John and Charles, and their deeply devotional hymns are by-products of their ministry. Evangelism rose from the lower classes and not from the upper classes, whose religion was somewhat stereotyped and ritualized in the eighteenth century.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH (1728-1774)

WOMAN

When lovely woman stoops to folly,
And finds too late that men betray,
What charm can soothe her melancholy?
What art can wash her tears away?

The only art her guilt to cover, 5
To hide her shame from ev'ry eye,
To give repentance to her lover,
And wring his bosom is—to die.

(1766)

Woman. This was sung by Olivia, eldest daughter of the Vicar of Wakefield, when she had returned home, having been betrayed by her lover.

*WILLIAM BLAKE (1757-1827)

TO THE MUSES

Whether on Ida's shady brow
  Or in the chambers of the East,
The chambers of the sun, that now
  From ancient melody have ceased;

Whether in heaven ye wander fair, 5
  Or the green corners of the earth,
Or the blue regions of the air
  Where the melodious winds have birth;

Whether on crystal rocks ye rove,
  Beneath the bosom of the sea, 10
Wandering in many a coral grove,
  Fair Nine, forsaking Poetry—

How have you left the ancient love
  That bards of old enjoyed in you!
The languid strings do scarcely move; 15
  The sound is forced, the notes are few.
(1783)

TO THE EVENING STAR

Thou fair-haired angel of the evening,
Now, whilst the sun rests on the mountains, light
Thy bright torch of love; thy radiant crown
Put on, and smile upon our evening bed!
Smile on our loves, and while thou drawest the 5
Blue curtains of the sky, scatter thy silver dew
On every flower that shuts its sweet eyes
In timely sleep. Let thy west wind sleep on
The lake; speak silence with thy glimmering eyes,
And wash the dusk with silver. Soon, full soon, 10
Dost thou withdraw; then the wolf rages wide,
And the lion glares through the dun forest.
The fleeces of our flocks are covered with
Thy sacred dew; protect them with thine influence. (1783)

SONG

My silks and fine array,
  My smiles and languished air,
By Love are driven away;
  And mournful lean Despair
Brings me yew to deck my grave. 5
Such end true lovers have.

His face is fair as heaven
  When springing buds unfold.
O why to him was't given,
  Whose heart is wintry cold? 10
His breast is Love's all-worshiped tomb,
Where all Love's pilgrims come.

Bring me an ax and spade,
  Bring me a winding-sheet;
When I my grave have made, 15
  Let winds and tempests beat;
Then down I'll lie, as cold as clay—
True love doth pass away! (1783)

INTRODUCTION TO SONGS OF INNOCENCE

Piping down the valleys wild,
  Piping songs of pleasant glee,
On a cloud I saw a child,
  And he laughing said to me:

"Pipe a song about a Lamb!" 5
  So I piped with merry cheer.
"Piper, pipe that song again";
  So I piped. He wept to hear.

* William Blake was equally creative in the realm of the fine arts and literature, for he excelled both in painting and engraving. He engraved his poems and surrounded them with beautiful etchings, which he tinted. Blake was a mystic, whose visions were as real to him as the world of the senses. Consequently his poetry has an exalted other-world quality which we do not find to an equal degree in other English lyric poetry, although occasional poems of Crashaw, Cowper, Coleridge, Poe, and Francis Thompson give a similar impression. Blake became progressively insane or unbalanced, so that while his early books—*Poetical Sketches* (1783), *Songs of Innocence* (1789), and *Songs of Experience* (1794)—are clear, his prophetic books become increasingly unintelligible. Of these we include one of the earliest, "The Book of Thel" (1789), and a lyric from one called *Milton*. Blake unconsciously did much to popularize the renaissance of wonder and the supernatural in poetry, as can be seen by comparing his poetry with that of Rossetti. Notice the progressive unearthliness of the poems of Blake given here. 1. **Ida**, a mountain which was a haunt of the Greek Muses. 12. **Fair Nine**, the Muses.

"Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe;
  Sing thy songs of happy cheer!" 10
So I sung the same again,
  While he wept with joy to hear.

"Piper, sit thee down and write
  In a book that all may read."
So he vanished from my sight; 15
  And I plucked a hollow reed,

And I made a rural pen,
  And I stained the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs
  Every child may joy to hear.

(1789)

THE LAMB

Little Lamb, who made thee?
  Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life and bid thee feed
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight, 5
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?
  Little Lamb, who made thee?
  Dost thou know who made thee? 10

Little Lamb, I'll tell thee;
  Little Lamb, I'll tell thee:
He is calléd by thy name,
For he calls himself a Lamb.
He is meek, and he is mild; 15
He became a little child.
I a child, and thou a lamb,
We are calléd by his name.
  Little Lamb, God bless thee!
  Little Lamb, God bless thee!

(1789)

NIGHT

The sun descending in the west,
  The evening star does shine;
The birds are silent in their nest,
  And I must seek for mine.
    The moon, like a flower 5
    In heaven's high bower,
    With silent delight
    Sits and smiles on the night.

Farewell, green fields and happy grove,
  Where flocks have took delight; 10
Where lambs have nibbled, silent move
  The feet of angels bright;
    Unseen they pour blessing
    And joy without ceasing
    On each bud and blossom, 15
    On each sleeping bosom.

They look in every thoughtless nest
  Where birds are covered warm;
They visit caves of every beast,
  To keep them all from harm. 20
    If they see any weeping
    That should have been sleeping,
    They pour sleep on their head,
    And sit down by their bed.

When wolves and tigers howl for prey, 25
  They pitying stand and weep,
Seeking to drive their thirst away
  And keep them from the sheep.
    But if they rush dreadful,
    The angels, most heedful, 30
    Receive each mild spirit,
    New worlds to inherit.

And there the lion's ruddy eyes
  Shall flow with tears of gold;
And pitying the tender cries, 35
  And walking round the fold,
    Saying, "Wrath by His meekness,
    And, by his health, sickness,
    Are driven away
    From our immortal day. 40

"And now beside thee, bleating lamb,
  I can lie down and sleep,
Or think on Him who bore thy name,
  Graze after thee, and weep.
    For, washed in life's river, 45
    My bright mane forever
    Shall shine like the gold
    As I guard o'er the fold."

(1789)

THE TIGER

Tiger! tiger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies 5
Burned the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, and what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart? 10
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? and what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp 15
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,
And watered heaven with their tears,
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tiger! tiger! burning bright 21
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?
(1794)

THE CLOD AND THE PEBBLE

"Love seeketh not itself to please,
Nor for itself hath any care,
But for another gives its ease,
And builds a heaven in hell's despair."

So sung a little clod of clay, 5
Trodden with the cattle's feet,
But a pebble of the brook
Warbled out these meters meet:

"Love seeketh only self to please,
To bind another to its delight, 10
Joys in another's loss of ease,
And builds a hell in heaven's despite."
(1794)

A POISON TREE

I was angry with my friend;
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.
I was angry with my foe;
I told it not, my wrath did grow.

And I watered it in fears 5
Night and morning with my tears,
And I sunnéd it with smiles
And with soft deceitful wiles.

And it grew both day and night,
Till it bore an apple bright, 10
And my foe beheld it shine,
And he knew that it was mine—

And into my garden stole
When the night had veiled the pole;
In the morning, glad, I see 15
My foe outstretched beneath the tree.
(1794)

AH, SUNFLOWER

Ah, Sunflower! weary of time,
Who countest the steps of the sun,
Seeking after that sweet golden clime
Where the traveler's journey is done—

Where the youth pined away with desire, 5
And the pale virgin, shrouded in snow,
Arise from their graves, and aspire
Where my sunflower wishes to go!
(1794)

LOVE'S SECRET

Never seek to tell thy love,
Love that never told can be;
For the gentle wind doth move
Silently, invisibly.

I told my love, I told my love, 5
I told her all my heart,
Trembling, cold, in ghastly fears.
Ah! she did depart!

Soon after she was gone from me,
A traveler came by, 10
Silently, invisibly;
He took her with a sigh.
c. 1793 (1866)

I SAW A CHAPEL ALL OF GOLD

I saw a Chapel all of gold
That none did dare to enter in,
And many weeping stood without,
Weeping, mourning, worshiping.

The Clod and the Pebble. Cf. "The Book of Thel" (page 435) and "Ulalume" (page 651).

Love's Secret. Poems with such psychological motivation were greatly developed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Cf. the love poetry of Browning, Mrs. Browning, Rossetti, Swinburne, Meredith, Symons, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Thomas S. Jones, Jr., E. A. Robinson, and Sara Teasdale.

I Saw a Chapel All of Gold. The violent revulsion of shattered ideals. Cf. all the poems from *Amoris Exsul* (page 625), "A Victory Dance" (page 632), "To Any Dead Officer" (page 616), and "Menelaus and Helen" (page 620). For a more resigned attitude, see "On Growing Old" (page 624) and "I Have a Rendezvous with Death" (page 692).

I saw a Serpent rise between 5
The white pillars of the door,
And he forced and forced and forced,
Down the golden hinges tore,

And along the pavement sweet,
Set with pearls and rubies bright, 10
All his shining length he drew,
Till upon the altar white

Vomiting his poison out
On the Bread and on the Wine.
So I turned into a sty, 15
And laid me down among the swine.

c. 1793 (1866)

THE BOOK OF THEL

Thel's Motto

Does the Eagle know what is in the pit;
Or wilt thou go ask the Mole?
Can Wisdom be put in a silver rod,
Or Love in a golden bowl?

I

The daughters of [the] Seraphim led round their sunny flocks—
All but the youngest; she in paleness sought the secret air,
To fade away like morning beauty from her mortal day.
Down by the river of Adona her soft voice is heard,
And thus her gentle lamentation falls like morning dew: 5

"O life of this our spring! why fades the lotus of the water?
Why fade these children of the spring, born but to smile and fall?
Ah! Thel is like a wat'ry bow, and like a parting cloud;
Like a reflection in a glass; like shadows in the water;
Like dreams of infants, like a smile upon an infant's face; 10
Like the dove's voice; like transient day; like music in the air.

Ah! gentle may I lay me down, and gentle rest my head,
And gentle sleep the sleep of death, and gentle hear the voice
Of Him that walketh in the garden in the evening time."

The Lily of the Valley, breathing in the humble grass, 15
Answeréd the lovely maid and said: "I am a wat'ry weed,
And I am very small, and love to dwell in lowly vales;
So weak, the gilded butterfly scarce perches on my head.
Yet I am visited from heaven, and He that smiles on all
Walks in the valley, and each morn over me spreads His hand, 20
Saying, 'Rejoice, thou humble grass, thou newborn lily flower,
Thou gentle maid of silent valleys and of modest brooks;
For thou shalt be clothéd in light, and fed with morning manna,
Till summer's heat melts thee beside the fountains and the springs,
To flourish in eternal vales.' Then why should Thel complain? 25
Why should the mistress of the vales of Har utter a sigh?"

She ceased, and smiled in tears, then sat down in her silver shrine.

Thel answered: "O thou little Virgin of the peaceful valley,
Giving to those that cannot crave, the voiceless, the o'ertired,
Thy breath doth nourish the innocent lamb; he smells thy milky garments; 30
He crops thy flowers while thou sittest smiling in his face,
Wiping his mild and meekin mouth from all contagious taints.
Thy wine doth purify the golden honey; thy perfume,
Which thou dost scatter on every little blade of grass that springs,
Revives the milkéd cow, and tames the fire-breathing steed. 35

15. **turned**, went.

The Book of Thel. The general meaning of this poem is the search of the spirit for the significance of life. The names are all symbols drawn from Blake's imagination.

32. **meekin.** Blake coined words. Probably this means *meek.*

But Thel is like a faint cloud kindled at the rising sun;
I vanish from my pearly throne, and who shall find my place?"

"Queen of the vales," the Lily answered, "ask the tender Cloud,
And it shall tell thee why it glitters in the morning sky,
And why it scatters its bright beauty through the humid air. 40
Descend, O little Cloud, and hover before the eyes of Thel."

The Cloud descended, and the Lily bowéd her modest head,
And went to mind her numerous charge among the verdant grass.

II

"O little Cloud," the Virgin said, "I charge thee tell to me
Why thou complainest not, when in one hour thou fade away; 45
Then we shall seek thee, but not find. Ah! Thel is like to thee;
I pass away; yet I complain, and no one hears my voice."

The Cloud then showed his golden head, and his bright form emerged,
Hovering and glittering on the air before the face of Thel.
"O Virgin, know'st thou not our steeds drink of the golden springs 50
Where Luvah doth renew his horses? Look'st thou on my youth,
And fearest thou, because I vanish and am seen no more,
Nothing remains? O Maid, I tell thee, when I pass away,
It is to tenfold life, to love, to peace, and raptures holy;
Unseen descending, weigh my light wings upon balmy flowers, 55
And court the fair-eyed dew, to take me to her shining tent.
The weeping virgin, trembling, kneels before the risen sun,
Till we arise, linked in a golden band and never part,
But walk united, bearing food to all our tender flowers."

"Dost thou, O little Cloud? I fear that I am not like thee, 60
For I walk through the vales of Har, and smell the sweetest flowers,
But I feed not the little flowers; I hear the warbling birds,
But I feed not the warbling birds; they fly and seek their food.
But Thel delights in these no more, because I fade away;
And all shall say, 'Without a use this shining woman lived, 65
Or did she only live to be at death the food of worms?' "

The Cloud reclined upon his airy throne, and answered thus:

"Then if thou art the food of worms, O Virgin of the skies,
How great thy use, how great thy blessing! Everything that lives
Lives not alone nor for itself. Fear not, and I will call 70
The weak Worm from its lowly bed, and thou shalt hear its voice.
Come forth, Worm of the silent valley, to thy pensive Queen."

The helpless Worm arose, and sat upon the Lily's leaf,
And the bright Cloud sailed on, to find his partner in the vale.

III

Then Thel astonished viewed the Worm upon its dewy bed. 75

"Art thou a Worm? Image of weakness, art thou but a Worm?
I see thee like an infant wrappéd in the Lily's leaf.
Ah! weep not, little voice, thou canst not speak, but thou canst weep.
Is this a Worm? I see thee lie helpless and naked, weeping,
And none to answer, none to cherish thee with mother's smiles." 80
The Clod of Clay heard the Worm's voice, and raised her pitying head;
She bowed over the weeping infant, and her life exhaled
In milky fondness. Then on Thel she fixed her humble eyes.

"O Beauty of the vales of Har! we live not for ourselves.
Thou seest me, the meanest thing, and so I am indeed. 85
My bosom of itself is cold, and of itself is dark;
But He that loves the lowly pours his oil upon my head,
And kisses me, and binds his nuptial bands around my breast,
And says: 'Thou mother of my children, I have lovéd thee,
And I have given thee a crown that none can take away.' 90
But how this is, sweet Maid, I know not, and I cannot know;
I ponder, and I cannot ponder; yet I live and love."

The daughter of beauty wiped her pitying tears with her white veil,
And said: "Alas! I knew not this, and therefore did I weep.
That God would love a worm I knew, and punish the evil foot 95
That willful bruised its helpless form; but that he cherished it
With milk and oil, I never knew, and therefore did I weep;
And I complained in the mild air, because I fade away,
And lay me down in thy cold bed, and leave my shining lot."

"Queen of the vales," the matron Clay answered, "I heard thy sighs, 100
And all thy moans flew o'er my roof, but I have called them down.
Wilt thou, O Queen, enter my house? 'Tis given thee to enter,
And to return. Fear nothing; enter with thy virgin feet."

IV

The eternal gates' terrific porter lifted the northern bar;
Thel entered in, and saw the secrets of the land unknown. 105
She saw the couches of the dead, and where the fibrous root
Of every heart on earth infixes deep its restless twists—
A land of sorrows and of tears where never smile was seen.
She wandered in the land of clouds through valleys dark, listening
Dolors and lamentations; waiting oft beside a dewy grave 110
She stood in silence, listening to the voices of the ground,
Till to her own grave-plot she came, and there she sat down,
And heard this voice of sorrow breathéd from the hollow pit.

"Why cannot the ear be closéd to its own destruction?
Or the glistening eye to the poison of a smile? 115
Why are eyelids stored with arrows ready drawn,
Where a thousand fighting men in ambush lie,
Or an eye of gifts and graces showering fruits and coinéd gold?

Why a tongue impressed with honey from every wind?
Why an ear, a whirlpool fierce to draw creations in? 120
Why a nostril wide inhaling terror, trembling, and affright?
Why a tender curb upon the youthful, burning boy?
Why a little curtain of flesh on the bed of our desire?"

The Virgin started from her seat, and with a shriek
Fled back unhindered till she came into the vales of Har. (1789)

AND DID THOSE FEET IN ANCIENT TIME

From MILTON

And did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's mountains green?
And was the holy Lamb of God
On England's pleasant pastures seen?

And did the Countenance Divine 5
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here
Among these dark satanic mills?

Bring me my bow of burning gold!
  Bring me my arrows of desire! 10
Bring me my spear! O clouds, unfold!
  Bring me my chariot of fire!

I will not cease from mental fight,
  Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem 15
  In England's green and pleasant land. (1804)

*ROBERT BURNS (1759-1796)

MARY MORISON

O Mary, at thy window be!
  It is the wished, the trysted hour.
Those smiles and glances let me see
  That make the misr's treasure poor.
How blythely wad I bide the stour 5
  A weary slave frae sun to sun,
Could I the rich reward secure—
  The lovely Mary Morison!

Yestreen, when to the trembling string
  The dance gaed through the lighted ha', 10
To thee my fancy took its wing—
  I sat, but neither heard nor saw.
Though this was fair, and that was braw,
  And yon the toast of a' the town,
I sighed, and said amang them a': 15
  "Ye are na Mary Morison."

O Mary, canst thou wreck his peace,
  Wha for thy sake wad gladly die?
Or canst thou break that heart of his,
  Whase only faut is loving thee? 20
If love for love thou wilt na gie,
  At least be pity to me shown;
A thought ungentle canna be
  The thought o' Mary Morison.
1780 (1800)

*See headnotes on Burns in the chapters on the Ballad (page 235) and on Modern Narrative Poetry (page 254). With the exception of "Ae Fond Kiss" (page 444), which was written to Mrs. M'Lehose, with whom he carried on a sentimental flirtation in Edinburgh, the girls to whom Burns wrote his love poems are Scotch country girls. Mary Morison is an alias for Ellison Begbie; Mary Campbell died in 1789 and Burns wrote "To Mary in Heaven" (page 444), a year later; Jean Armour he married in 1788.

Mary Morison. 5. **stour**, dusty wind. 13. **braw**, fine.

TO A MOUSE

ON TURNING HER UP IN HER NEST WITH THE PLOW, NOVEMBER, 1785

Wee, sleekit, cowrin, tim'rous beastie,
O what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa sae hasty,
  Wi' bickering brattle!
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee, 5
  Wi' murdering pattle!

I'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken Nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion
  Which makes thee startle 10
At me, thy poor, earth-born companion,
  An' fellow-mortal!

I doubt na, whyles, but thou may thieve;
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!
A daimen icker in a thrave 15
  'S a sma' request;
I'll get a blessin wi' the lave,
  An' never miss 't!

Thy wee-bit housie, too, in ruin!
Its silly wa's the win's are strewin! 20
An' naething now to big a new ane,
  O' foggage green!
An' bleak December's win's ensuin,
  Baith snell an' keen!

Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste,
An' weary winter comin fast, 26
An' cozie here, beneath the blast,
  Thou thought to dwell—
Till, crash! the cruel coulter passed
  Out through thy cell. 30

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble
Has cost thee monie a weary nibble!
Now thou's turned out, for a' thy trouble,
  But house or hald,
To thole the winter's sleety dribble, 35
  An' cranreuch cauld!

To a Mouse. Note Burns's delightful humor, tenderness, and realism. 4. **bickering brattle**, hurry-scurry. 6. **pattle**, plow-spade. 15. **A daimen**, etc., "an occasional ear of corn in a double shock." A *thrave* was a double shock of twenty-four sheaves. 17. **lave**, remainder. 21. **big**, build. 22. **foggage**, foliage. 24. **Baith snell**, both sharp. 29. **coulter**, plow. 34. **But**, etc., without house or home. 35. **thole**, suffer, endure. 36. **cranreuch**, hoar frost.

But mousie, thou art no thy lane
In proving foresight may be vain;
The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men
Gang aft agley, 40
An' lea'e us naught but grief an' pain
For promised joy!

Still, thou art blest compared wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee.
But och! I backward cast my e'e, 45
On prospects drear!
An' forward, though I canna see,
I guess an' fear! (1786)

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT

My loved, my honored, much respected friend!
No mercenary bard his homage pays;
With honest pride, I scorn each selfish end—
My dearest meed, a friend's esteem and praise.
To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays, 5
The lowly train in life's sequestered scene,
The native feelings strong, the guileless ways,
What Aiken in a cottage would have been;
Ah! though his worth unknown, far happier there, I ween!

November chill blaws loud wi' angry sough; 10
The short'ning winter-day is near a close;
The miry beasts retreating frae the pleugh;
The black'ning trains o' craws to their repose;
The toil-worn Cotter frae his labor goes,
This night his weekly moil is at an end,
Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes, 16
Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
And weary, o'er the moor, his course does hameward bend.

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an aged tree; 20
Th' expectant wee-things, toddlin, stacher through
To meet their dad, wi' flichterin noise and glee.
His wee-bit ingle, blinkin bonilie,
His clean hearth-stane, his thrifty wifie's smile,
The lisping infant, prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary kiaugh and care beguile, 26
And makes him quite forget his labor and his toil.

Belyve, the elder bairns come drappin in,
At service out, amang the farmers roun';
Some ca' the pleugh, some herd, some tentie rin 30
A cannie errand to a neebor town.
Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman-grown,
In youthfu' bloom, love sparkling in her e'e,
Comes hame, perhaps to show a braw new gown,
Or deposite her sair-won penny-fee, 35
To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be.

With joy unfeigned brothers and sisters meet,
And each for other's weelfare kindly spiers;
The social hours, swift-winged, unnoticed fleet;
Each tells the uncos that he sees or hears. 40
The parents, partial, eye their hopeful years;
Anticipation forward points the view;
The mother, wi' her needle an' her sheers,

37. **no thy lane**, not alone. 40. **agley**, amiss.
The Cotter's Saturday Night. A lyric rhapsody on Scottish country life. A combination of lyric and narrative poetry. When Burns moralized, he frequently employed English rather than his native Scotch dialect, as in the present poem. 1. **My loved**, etc. The poem is dedicated to Robert Aiken, a lawyer friend of Burns. See "Holy Willie's Prayer" (page 450). 10. **sough**, wail.

21. **stacher**, stagger, toddle. 22. **flichterin**, chattering. 23. **ingle**, fireplace. 26. **kiaugh**, worry. 28. **Belyve**, soon. 30. **ca'**, drive. **tentie**, carefully. 31. **cannie**, requiring intelligence. 34. **braw**, fine. 35. **sair-won**, hard-earned. 38. **spiers**, asks. 40. **uncos**, news.

Gars auld claes look amaist as weel's the new;
The father mixes a' wi' admonition due. 45

Their master's and their mistress's command
The younkers a' are warnéd to obey;
And mind their labors wi' an eydent hand,
And ne'er, though out o' sight, to jauk or play;
"And oh! be sure to fear the Lord alway,
And mind your duty, duly, morn an' night; 51
Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,
Implore his counsel and assisting might—
They never sought in vain that sought the Lord aright!"

But hark! a rap comes gently to the door; 55
Jenny, wha kens the meaning o' the same,
Tells how a neebor lad cam o'er the moor,
To do some errands, and convoy her hame.
The wily mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her cheek; 60
With heart-struck, anxious care, inquires his name,
While Jenny hafflins is afraid to speak;
Weel pleased the mother hears it's nae wild, worthless rake.

Wi' kindly welcome Jenny brings him ben,
A strappin youth; he takes the mother's eye; 65
Blythe Jenny sees the visit's no ill taen;
The father cracks of horses, pleughs, and kye.
The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi' joy,
But blate and laithfu', scarce can weel behave;

44. **Gars**, makes. **claes**, clothes. 48. **eydent**, attentive. 62. **hafflins**, in part. 64. **ben**, within. 67. **cracks**, talks. **kye**, cows. 69. **blate**, bashful. **laithfu'**, shy.

The mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can spy 70
What makes the youth sae bashfu' and sae grave,
Weel-pleased to think her bairn's respected like the lave.

O happy love! where love like this is found!
O heartfelt raptures! bliss beyond compare!
I've pacéd much this weary, mortal round, 75
And sage experience bids me this declare—
"If Heaven a draft of heavenly pleasure spare,
One cordial in this melancholy vale,
'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair
In other's arms breathe out the tender tale, 80
Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the ev'ning gale."

Is there, in human form, that bears a heart,
A wretch! a villain! lost to love and truth!
That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth? 85
Curse on his perjured arts! dissembling smooth!
Are honor, virtue, conscience, all exiled?
Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,
Points to the parents fondling o'er their child;
Then paints the ruined maid, and their distraction wild? 90

But now the supper crowns their simple board,
The halesome parritch, chief o' Scotia's food;
The sowpe their only hawkie does afford,
That 'yont the hallan snugly chows her cood;
The dame brings forth, in complimental mood, 95

72. **the lave**, the rest. 92. **parritch**, porridge. 93. **sowpe**, liquid. **hawkie**, cow. 94. **'yont**, beyond. **hallan** partition.

To grace the lad, her weel-hained kebbuck, fell;
And aft he's prest, and aft he ca's it guid;
The frugal wifie, garrulous, will tell
How 'twas a towmond auld, sin' lint was i' the bell.

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face, 100
They round the ingle form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
The big ha' Bible, ance his father's pride;
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets wearing thin and bare; 105
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
He wales a portion with judicious care;
And "Let us worship God!" he says with solemn air.

They chant their artless notes in simple guise;
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim. 110
Perhaps "Dundee's" wild, warbling measures rise,
Or plaintive "Martyrs," worthy of the name;
Or noble "Elgin" beets the heavenward flame,
The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays.
Compared with these, Italian trills are tame; 115
The tickled ears no heartfelt raptures raise;
Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise.

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,
How Abram was the friend of God on high;
Or Moses bade eternal warfare wage 120
With Amalek's ungracious progeny;
Or how the royal bard did groaning lie
Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire;
Or Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry;
Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire; 125
Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme,
How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed;
How He, who bore in heaven the second name,
Had not on earth whereon to lay his head; 130
How his first followers and servants sped;
The precepts sage they wrote to many a land;
How he, who lone in Patmos banishéd,
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand,
And heard great Bab'lon's doom pronounced by Heav'n's command.

Then kneeling down to Heaven's Eternal King, 136
The saint, the father, and the husband prays:
Hope "springs exulting on triumphant wing,"
That thus they all shall meet in future days,
There ever bask in uncreated rays, 140
No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
In such society, yet still more dear,
While circling Time moves round in an eternal sphere.

Compared with this, how poor Religion's pride 145
In all the pomp of method and of art,
When men display to congregations wide
Devotion's ev'ry grace, except the heart!
The Pow'r, incensed, the pageant will desert,
The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole; 150
But haply, in some cottage far apart,

96. **weel-hained**, well-saved. **kebbuck, fell**, strong cheese. 97. **aft**, often. 99. **towmond**, twelve-month. **lint**, flax. 103. **ha' Bible**, hall Bible. 105. **lyart haffets**, gray locks. 107. **wales**, chooses. 111-113. **Dundee, Martyrs, Elgin**, names of hymns. 113. **beets**, rouses. 122. **royal bard**, David.

127. **Christian volume**, New Testament. 133. **Patmos**, an island in the Aegean Sea, on which St. John the Evangelist wrote the book of Revelation. 138. **Hope springs**, etc., from Pope's *Windsor Forest*, line 112.

May hear, well pleased, the language of the soul,
And in His Book of Life the inmates poor enroll.

Then homeward all take off their sev'ral way;
The youngling cottagers retire to rest;
The parent-pair their secret homage pay, 156
And proffer up to Heav'n the warm request
That He who stills the raven's clam'rous nest,
And decks the lily fair in flow'ry pride,
Would, in the way his wisdom sees the best, 160
For them and for their little ones provide;
But chiefly, in their hearts with grace divine preside.

From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,
That makes her loved at home, revered abroad.
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings, 165
"An honest man's the noblest work of God";
And certes, in fair Virtue's heavenly road,
The cottage leaves the palace far behind;
What is a lordling's pomp? a cumbrous load,
Disguising oft the wretch of human kind, 170
Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refined!

O Scotia! my dear, my native soil!
For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent,
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content! 175
And oh! may Heaven their simple lives prevent
From luxury's contagion, weak and vile!
Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,
A virtuous populace may rise the while,
And stand a wall of fire around their much-loved isle. 180

O Thou! who poured the patriotic tide
That streamed through Wallace's undaunted heart,
Who dared to nobly stem tyrannic pride,
Or nobly die, the second glorious part,
(The patriot's God peculiarly thou art,
His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward!) 186
O never, never Scotia's realm desert,
But still the patriot, and the patriot-bard,
In bright succession raise, her ornament and guard! (1786)

166. **An honest man's**, etc., from Pope's *Essay on Man*, IV, 248.

182. **Wallace.** See note on line 1 of "Scots, Wha Hae" (page 446).

A RED, RED ROSE

O my Luve's like a red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June;
O my Luve's like the melodie
That's sweetly played in tune!

So fair art thou, my bonnie lass, 5
So deep in luve am I;
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry—

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun; 10
I will luve thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only Luve,
And fare thee weel a while!
And I will come again, my Luve, 15
Though it were ten thousand mile.
(1796)

MY JEAN

Of a' the airts the wind can blaw,
I dearly like the west,
For there the bonnie lassie lives,
The lassie I lo'e best.
There wild woods grow, and rivers row, 5
And monie a hill between;
But day and night my fancy's flight
Is ever wi' my Jean.

My Jean. 1. **airts**, quarters of the compass.

I see her in the dewy flowers,
  I see her sweet and fair. 10
I hear her in the tunefu' birds,
  I hear her charm the air.
There's not a bonnie flower that springs
  By fountain, shaw, or green;
There's not a bonnie bird that sings, 15
  But minds me o' my Jean. (1790)

AULD LANG SYNE

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
  And never brought to min'?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
  And auld lang syne?

Chorus.—For auld lang syne, my dear, 5
  For auld lang syne,
  We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
  For auld lang syne.

We twa hae run about the braes,
  And pu'd the gowans fine; 10
But we've wandered monie a weary fit
  Sin' auld lang syne.

  For auld, etc.

We twa hae paidl't i' the burn,
  Frae mornin' sun til dine; 15
But seas between us braid hae roared
  Sin' auld lang syne.

  For auld, etc.

And there's a hand, my trusty fiere,
  And gie's a hand o' thine; 20
And we'll tak a right guid-willie waught
  For auld lang syne.

  For auld, etc.

And surely ye'll be your pint-stowp,
  And surely I'll be mine; 25
And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
  For auld lang syne!

  For auld, etc.

(1796)

14. **shaw**, wood.
Auld Lang Syne. The title means "old long ago." 10. **gowans**, daisies. 11. **fit**, foot. 15. **dine**, dinner time. 16. **braid**, broad. 19. **fiere**, comrade. 21. **right guid-willie waught**, good friendly big drink. 24. **be**, have. **pint-stowp**, drinking cup.

JOHN ANDERSON, MY JO, JOHN

John Anderson, my jo, John,
  When we were first acquent,
Your locks were like the raven,
  Your bonnie brow was brent;
But now your brow is beld, John, 5
  Your locks are like the snow;
But blessings on your frosty pow,
  John Anderson, my jo!

John Anderson, my jo, John,
  We clamb the hill thegither; 10
And monie a canty day, John,
  We've had wi' ane anither.
Now we maun totter down, John,
  And hand in hand we'll go,
And sleep thegither at the foot, 15
  John Anderson, my jo.

(1790)

OH, WILLIE BREWED A PECK O' MAUT

Oh, Willie brewed a peck o' maut,
  And Rob and Allan cam to see;
Three blyther hearts, that lee-lang night,
  Ye wad na found in Christendie.

Chorus.—We are na fou, we're nae that fou, 5
  But just a drappie in our e'e;
  The cock may craw, the day may daw,
  And aye we'll taste the barley bree!

Here are we met, three merry boys,
  Three merry boys, I trow, are we; 10
And mony a night we've merry been,
  And mony mae we hope to be!

It is the moon, I ken her horn,
  That's blinkin in the lift sae hie;
She shines sae bright to wyle us hame, 15
  But, by my sooth, she'll wait a wee!

John Anderson. Cf. "The Land o' the Leal" (page 451). 1. **jo**, beloved. 4. **brent**, unwrinkled. 5. **beld**, bald. 7. **pow**, head. 11. **canty**, happy.
Oh, Willie Brewed, etc. One of the many amusing convivial songs of Burns. The "Rob" is Burns himself; "Willie" and "Allan" are two friends. 8. **bree**, brew. 14. **lift**, heaven. 15. **wyle**, decoy.

Wha first shall rise to gang awa, 17
A cuckold, coward loun is he!
Wha first beside his chair shall fa',
He is the king amang us three!
(1790)

TO MARY IN HEAVEN

Thou ling'ring star, with less'ning ray,
That lov'st to greet the early morn,
Again thou usher'st in the day
My Mary from my soul was torn.
O Mary! dear departed shade! 5
Where is thy place of blissful rest?
See'st thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

That sacred hour can I forget,
Can I forget the hallowed grove, 10
Where by the winding Ayr we met
To live one day of parting love?
Eternity will not efface
Those records dear of transports past,
Thy image at our last embrace— 15
Ah! little thought we 'twas our last!

Ayr, gurgling, kissed his pebbled shore,
O'erhung with wild woods, thick'ning green;
The fragrant birch and hawthorn hoar
Twined amorous round the raptured scene. 20
The flow'rs sprang wanton to be prest,
The birds sang love on every spray,
Till too, too soon the glowing west
Proclaimed the speed of wingéd day.

Still o'er these scenes my mem'ry wakes, 25
And fondly broods with miser care!
Time but th' impression stronger makes,
As streams their channels deeper wear.
My Mary, dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of blissful rest? 30
See'st thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?
(1790)

18. **loun**, rascal.

THE LOVELY LASS O' INVERNESS

A LAMENT FOR CULLODEN

The lovely lass o' Inverness,
Nae joy nor pleasure can she see;
For e'en and morn she cries, "Alas!"
And aye the saut tear blin's her e'e:
"Drumossie moor, Drumossie day, 5
A waefu' day it was to me!
For there I lost my father dear,
My father dear and brethren three.

"Their winding-sheet the bluidy clay;
Their graves are growing green to see;
And by them lies the dearest lad 11
That ever blest a woman's e'e!
Now wae to thee, thou cruel lord,
A bluidy man I trow thou be;
For monie a heart thou hast made sair
That ne'er did wrang to thine or thee."
(1796)

AE FOND KISS

Ae fond kiss, and then we sever;
Ae fareweel, alas, forever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee;
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee!

Who shall say that Fortune grieves him
While the star of hope she leaves him? 6
Me, nae cheerfu' twinkle lights me;
Dark despair around benights me.

I'll ne'er blame my partial fancy;
Naething could resist my Nancy; 10
But to see her was to love her,
Love but her, and love forever.

Had we never loved sae kindly,
Had we never loved sae blindly,
Never met—or never parted, 15
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

Fare thee weel, thou first and fairest!
Fare thee weel, thou best and dearest!
Thine be ilka joy and treasure,
Peace, enjoyment, love, and pleasure! 20

The Lovely Lass o' Inverness. In 1746 the Duke of Cumberland and the English defeated the Scotch supporters of the Stuart Pretender near Drumossie Moor, or Culloden.
Ae Fond Kiss. 4. **wage**, pledge. 10. **Nancy**, Mrs. M'Lehose.

Ae fond kiss, and then we sever!
Ae fareweel, alas, forever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee;
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee!
(1792)

THE BANKS O' DOON

Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon,
How can ye bloom sae fresh and fair?
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae weary fu' o' care?
Thou'lt break my heart, thou warbling bird, 5
That wantons through the flowering thorn;
Thou minds me o' departed joys,
Departed never to return.

Aft hae I roved by bonnie Doon,
To see the rose and woodbine twine;
And ilka bird sang o' its love, 11
And fondly sae did I o' mine.
Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,
Fu' sweet upon its thorny tree;
And my fause lover stole my rose, 15
But ah! he left the thorn wi' me.
(c. 1792)

BONNIE LESLEY

O saw ye bonnie Lesley
As she gaed o'er the border?
She's gane, like Alexander,
To spread her conquests farther.

To see her is to love her, 5
And love but her forever;
For Nature made her what she is,
And never made anither!

Thou art a queen, fair Lesley,
Thy subjects we, before thee; 10
Thou art divine, fair Lesley,
The hearts o' men adore thee.

The Deil he could na scaith thee,
Or aught that wad belang thee;
He'd look into thy bonnie face, 15
And say, "I canna wrang thee."

The Powers aboon will tent thee;
Misfortune sha'na steer thee;
Thou'rt like themselves sae lovely
That ill they'll ne'er let near thee. 20

Return again, fair Lesley,
Return to Caledonie!
That we may brag we hae a lass
There's nane again sae bonnie.
(c. 1792)

HIGHLAND MARY

Ye banks and braes and streams around
The castle o' Montgomery,
Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,
Your waters never drumlie!
There simmer first unfauld her robes, 5
And there the langest tarry;
For there I took the last fareweel
O' my sweet Highland Mary.

How sweetly bloomed the gay green birk,
How rich the hawthorn's blossom, 10
As underneath their fragrant shade
I clasped her to my bosom!
The golden hours on angel wings
Flew o'er me and my dearie;
For dear to me as light and life 15
Was my sweet Highland Mary.

Wi' monie a vow and locked embrace
Our parting was fu' tender;
And, pledging aft to meet again,
We tore ourselves asunder; 20
But oh! fell Death's untimely frost,
That nipped my flower sae early!
Now green's the sod, and cauld's the clay,
That wraps my Highland Mary!

O pale, pale now, those rosy lips 25
I aft hae kissed sae fondly!

The Banks o' Doon. 1. **Doon**, a river in Ayrshire; cf. "Tam O' Shanter" (page 254). 6. **thorn**, hawthorn tree.

Bonnie Lesley. The poem was addressed to Miss Leslie Baillie, a young lady of Ayrshire, on the occasion of her leaving with her father for a visit to England. Most of Burns's poems which deal with women were inspired by girls whom he knew personally.

13. **scaith**, harm. 17. **tent**, tend. 18. **steer**, touch. 22. **Caledonie**, Caledonia, the poetic name for Scotland.

Highland Mary. Highland Mary is Mary Campbell. 4. **drumlie**, muddy. 9. **birk**, birch.

And closed for aye the sparkling glance
  That dwelt on me sae kindly!
And mold'ring now in silent dust,
  That heart that lo'ed me dearly! 30
But still within my bosom's core
  Shall live my Highland Mary.
1792 (1799)

DUNCAN GRAY

Duncan Gray came here to woo,
  Ha, ha, the wooin o't!
On blythe Yule night when we were fou,
  Ha, ha, the wooin o't!
Maggie coost her head fu heigh, 5
Looked asklent and unco skiegh,
Gart poor Duncan stand abiegh;
  Ha, ha, the wooin o't!

Duncan fleeched, and Duncan prayed;
  Ha, ha, the wooin o't! 10
Meg was deaf as Ailsa Craig,
  Ha, ha, the wooin o't!
Duncan sighed baith out and in,
Grat his een baith bleer't and blin',
Spak o' lowpin owre a linn; 15
  Ha, ha, the wooin o't!

Time and chance are but a tide,
  Ha, ha, the wooin o't!
Slighted love is sair to bide,
  Ha, ha, the wooin o't! 20
"Shall I, like a fool," quoth he,
"For a haughty hizzie die?
She may gae to—France for me!"
  Ha, ha, the wooin o't!

How it comes let doctors tell, 25
  Ha, ha, the wooin o't!
Meg grew sick as he grew hale,
  Ha, ha, the wooin o't!
Something in her bosom wrings,
For relief a sigh she brings; 30
And O! her een, they spak sic things!
  Ha, ha, the wooin o't!

Duncan was a lad o' grace,
  Ha, ha, the wooin' o't!
Maggie's was a piteous case, 35
  Ha, ha, the wooin o't!
Duncan could na be her death,
Swelling pity smoored his wrath;
Now they're crouse and cantie baith;
  Ha, ha, the wooin o't! 1792 (1798)

3. **fou**, full. 6. **unco skiegh**, very shy. 7. **Gart**, made. **abiegh**, aloof. 9. **fleeched**, begged. 11. **Ailsa Craig**, a rocky islet in the Firth of Clyde. 14. **Grat**, etc., "wept his eyes both bleared and blind." 15. **Spak**, etc., "spoke of jumping over a waterfall." 17. **tide**, season. 19. **bide**, endure. 22. **hizzie**, hussy.

38. **smoored**, smothered. 39. **crouse**, lively. **cantie**, contented.

SCOTS, WHA HAE

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led,
Welcome to your gory bed,
  Or to victory!
Now's the day, and now's the hour; 5
See the front o' battle lour;
See approach proud Edward's power—
  Chains and slavery!

Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave? 10
Wha sae base as be a slave?
  Let him turn and flee!
Wha for Scotland's king and law
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Freeman stand, or Freeman fa', 15
  Let him follow me!

By oppression's woes and pains
By your sons in servile chains!
We will drain our dearest veins,
  But they shall be free! 20
Lay the proud usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty's in every blow!—
  Let us do or die! (1794)

Scots, Wha Hae. Bruce and the Scotch defeated Edward II and the English at Bannockburn in 1314. The poem is the supposed speech of Bruce to his troops before the battle. 1. **Wallace.** During the thirteenth century Wallace, a Scottish chief, had kept up a continual resistance to the English. He was captured and executed in 1305.

A MAN'S A MAN FOR A' THAT

Is there, for honest poverty,
  That hings his head, an' a' that?
The coward slave, we pass him by,
  We dare be poor for a' that!
    For a' that, an' a' that, 5
      Our toils obscure, an' a' that;
    The rank is but the guinea's stamp;
      The man's the gowd for a' that.

A Man's a Man for A' That. This poem shows the republican spirit of Burns. 8. **gowd**, gold.

What though on hamely fare we dine,
  Wear hodden-gray, an' a' that; 10
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine,
  A man's a man for a' that.
    For a' that, an' a' that,
      Their tinsel show, an' a' that;
    The honest man, though e'er sae poor, 15
      Is king o' men for a' that.

Ye see yon birkie, ca'd a lord,
  Wha struts, an' stares, an' a' that;
Though hundreds worship at his word,
  He's but a coof for a' that. 20
    For a' that, an' a' that,
      His riband, star, an' a' that,
    The man o' independent mind,
      He looks and laughs at a' that.

A prince can mak a belted knight, 25
  A marquis, duke, an' a' that;
But an honest man's aboon his might,
  Guid faith he mauna fa' that!
    For a' that, an' a' that,
      Their dignities, an' a' that, 30
The pith o' sense, an' pride o' worth,
  Are higher rank than a' that.

Then let us pray that come it may,
  As come it will for a' that,
That sense and worth, o'er a' the earth,
  May bear the gree, an' a' that. 36
    For a' that, an' a' that,
      It's coming yet, for a' that,
    That man to man, the warld o'er,
      Shall brothers be for a' that.

1794 (1800)

O WERT THOU IN THE CAULD BLAST

O wert thou in the cauld blast,
  On yonder lea, on yonder lea,
My plaidie to the angry airt,
  I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee;
Or did misfortune's bitter storms 5
  Around thee blaw, around thee blaw,
Thy bield should be my bosom,
  To share it a', to share it a'.

Or were I in the wildest waste,
  Sae black and bare, sae black and bare, 10
The desert were a paradise
  If thou wert there, if thou wert there;
Or were I monarch o' the globe,
  Wi' thee to reign, wi' thee to reign,
The brightest jewel in my crown 15
  Wad be my queen, wad be my queen.

1796 (1800)

ADDRESS TO THE DEIL

O thou! whatever title suit thee,
Auld Hornie, Satan, Nick, or Clootie,
Wha in yon cavern grim an' sootie,
  Closed under hatches,
Spairges about the brunstane cootie, 5
  To scaud poor wretches!

Hear me, auld Hangie, for a wee,
An' let poor damnéd bodies be;
I'm sure sma' pleasure it can gie,
  Ev'n to a deil, 10
To skelp an' scaud poor dogs like me,
  An' hear us squeal!

Great is thy pow'r, an' great thy fame;
Far kenn'd an' noted is thy name;
An', though yon lowin heugh's thy hame, 15
  Thou travels far;
An' faith! thou's neither lag nor lame,
  Nor blate nor scaur.

Whyles rangin' like a roarin' lion
For prey, a' holes an' corners tryin'; 20
Whyles on the strong-wing'd tempest flyin',
  Tirlin' the kirks;
Whyles, in the human bosom pryin',
  Unseen thou lurks.

10. **hodden-gray,** rough gray cloth. 17. **birkie,** youngster. 20. **coof,** fool. 27. **aboon,** above. 28. **mauna fa',** must not claim. 36. **gree,** prize.

O Wert Thou in the Cauld Blast. 3. **airt,** quarter of the sky. 7. **bield,** shelter.

Address to the Deil. To the orthodox Scots of Burns's time the Devil was a personal force to be reckoned with seriously. Not only did they think of him as the Great Opposite of the Almighty, but they believed that he interfered maliciously in the daily doings of men. Burns satirized the current superstitions by slapping Satan playfully on the back and even expressing pity for him—much to the horror of certain of his contemporaries. 2. **Clootie,** "hoofie," from Satan's cloven foot. 5. **Spairges about the brunstane cootie,** splashes about the brimstone dish. 7. **Hangie,** hangman, a frequent epithet for Satan. 11. **skelp,** strike. **scaud,** scald. 15. **lowin heugh,** flaming pit. 17. **lag,** slow. 18. **blate,** bashful. **scaur,** timid. 22. **Tirlin',** unroofing.

I've heard my reverend grannie say 25
In lanely glens ye like to stray;
Or, where auld ruined castles gray
Nod to the moon,
Ye fright the nightly wand'rer's way,
Wi' eldritch croon. 30

When twilight did my grannie summon
To say her pray'rs, douce, honest woman!
Aft yont the dyke she's heard you bummin',
Wi' eerie drone;
Or, rustlin', through the boortrees comin', 35
Wi' heavy groan.

Ae dreary windy winter night
The stars shot down wi' sklentin' light,
Wi' you mysel I gat a fright
Ayont the lough; 40
Ye like a rash-buss stood in sight
Wi' waving sough.

The cudgel in my nieve did shake,
Each bristled hair stood like a stake,
When wi' an eldritch stoor "quaick, quaick," 45
Amang the springs,
Awa ye squattered like a drake
On whistlin' wings.

Let warlocks grim an' withered hags
Tell how wi' you on ragweed nags 50
They skim the muirs, an' dizzy crags
Wi' wicked speed;
And in kirkyards renew their leagues
Owre howkit dead.

Thence country wives, wi' toil an' pain, 55
May plunge an' plunge the kirn in vain;
For oh! the yellow treasure's taen
By witchin' skill;
An' dawtit twal-pint Hawkie's gane
As yell's the bill. 60

Thence mystic knots mak great abuse
On young guidmen, fond, keen, an' crouse;
When the best wark-lume i' the house,
By cantrip wit,
Is instant made no worth a louse, 65
Just at the bit.

When thowes dissolve the snawy hoord,
An' float the jinglin' icy-boord,
Then water-kelpies haunt the foord,
By your direction, 70
An' 'nighted trav'lers are allured
To their destruction.

An' aft your moss-traversing spunkies
Decoy the wight that late an' drunk is.
The bleezin, curst, mischievous monkies 75
Delude his eyes,
Till in some miry slough he sunk is,
Ne'er mair to rise.

When Masons' mystic word an' grip
In storms an' tempests raise you up, 80
Some cock or cat your rage maun stop,
Or, strange to tell!
The youngest brither ye wad whip
Aff straught to hell.

Lang syne, in Eden's bonnie yard, 85
When youthfu' lovers first were paired,
And all the soul of love they shared,
The raptured hour,
Sweet on the fragrant flow'ry swaird,
In shady bow'r; 90

30. **eldritch croon**, unearthly moan. 32. **douce**, prudent and sedate. 33. **Aft**, often. **yont**, beyond. **bummin'**, humming. 35. **boortrees**, shrub-elders used as hedges. 38. **sklentin'**, slanting. 40. **Ayont**, beyond. **lough**, lake. 41. **rash-buss**, clump of rushes. 42. **sough**, moan. 43. **nieve**, fist. 45. **eldritch stoor**, unearthly hoarse; *stoor* is an adjective modifying *quaick*. 49. **warlocks**, wizards. With this stanza compare the description of warlocks and witches in "Tam O' Shanter" (page 254). 50. **ragweed nags.** Ragweeds, like broomsticks, were used by the witches for steeds. 54. **howkit**, disinterred. 56. **kirn**, churn. The witches were interfering with the churning.

59. **dawtit twal-pint Hawkie**, etc. "The pet cow that gave twelve pints of milk has gone as dry as the bull." 62. **crouse**, jolly. 63. **wark-lume**, work-loom; the witches were tying the yarn into knots. 64. **cantrip wit**, magic trick. 66. **bit**, the nick of time; on the instant. 67. **thowes**, thaws. 68. **icy-boord**, the surface of the ice. 69. **water-kelpies**, water-demons, usually shaped like horses. 71. **'nighted**, benighted. 73. **spunkies**, marsh lights or will-o'-the-wisps. With this and the preceding three or four stanzas compare Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, II, i, where the same mischievous activities are ascribed to Puck, or Robin Goodfellow. 79. **Masons' mystic word.** Burns was an ardent Mason. The allusion here is to the Masonic initiation; the cock or cat is given to the devil as a substitute for the trembling initiate.

Then you, ye auld snick-drawing dog!
Ye cam to Paradise incog.
An' played on man a cursed brogue
(Black be you fa!),
An' gied the infant warld a shog, 95
'Maist ruined a'.

D'ye mind that day, when in a bizz,
Wi' reekit duds, an' reestit gizz,
Ye did present your smoutie phiz
'Mang better folk, 100
An' sklented on the man of Uz
Your spitefu' joke?

An' how ye gat him i' your thrall,
An' brak him out o' house an' hal',
While scabs an' blotches did him gall 105
Wi' bitter claw,
An' lowsed his ill-tongu'd wicked scawl,
Was warst ava?

But a' your doings to rehearse,
Your wily snares an' fechtin' fierce, 110
Sin' that day Michael did you pierce,
Down to this time,
Wad ding a' Lallan tongue, or Erse,
In prose or rime.

An' now, auld Cloots, I ken ye're thinkin' 115
A certain Bardie's rantin', drinkin',
Some luckless hour will send him linkin',
To your black pit;
But faith! he'll turn a corner jinkin',
An' cheat you yet. 120

But fare you weel, auld Nickie-ben!
O wad ye tak a thought an' men'!
Ye aiblins might—I dinna ken—
Still hae a stake;
I'm wae to think upo' yon den, 125
Ev'n for your sake!

(1786)

91. **snick-drawing**, latch-drawing. 93. **brogue**, trick. 95. **shog**, shake. 97. **bizz**, flurry. 98. **reekit duds**, smoky clothes. **reestit gizz**, singed hair. 99. **smoutie phiz**, smutty face. 101. **sklented**, squinted. **man of Uz**, Job; for the allusions in this and the next stanza read the first two chapters of Job. 107. **lowsed**, loosed. 108. **ava**, of all. 110. **fechtin'**, fighting. 113. **ding**, beat. **Lallan**, Scotch lowland. **Erse**, Gaelic. 117. **linkin'**, skipping. 119. **jinkin'**, nimbly. 122. **men'**, mend, improve your ways. 123. **aiblins**, perhaps. 124. **stake**, chance. 125. **wae**, sorry.

ADDRESS TO THE UNCO GUID, OR THE RIGIDLY RIGHTEOUS

My son, these maxims make a rule,
And lump them aye thegither:
The rigid righteous is a fool,
The rigid wise anither;
*The cleanest corn that e'er was dight,**
May hae some pyles o' caff in;
So ne'er a fellow-creature slight
For random fits o' daffin.
SOLOMON (Eccles. vii. 16).

O ye wha are sae guid yoursel,
Sae pious and sae holy,
Ye've nought to do but mark and tell
Your neibor's fauts and folly!
Whase life is like a weel-gaun mill, 5
Supplied wi' store o' water;
The heapéd happer's ebbing still,
And still the clap plays clatter.

Hear me, ye venerable core,
As counsel for poor mortals, 10
That frequent pass douce Wisdom's door,
For glaikit Folly's portals;
I, for their thoughtless careless sakes,
Would here propone defenses—
Their donsie tricks, their black mistakes, 15
Their failings and mischances.

Ye see your state wi' their's compared,
And shudder at the niffer;
But cast a moment's fair regard—
What maks the mighty differ? 20
Discount what scant occasion gave,
That purity ye pride in,
And (what's aft mair than a' the lave)
Your better art o' hidin.'

Think, when your castigated pulse 25
Gies now and then a wallop,
What ragings must his veins convulse,
That still eternal gallop!
Wi' wind and tide fair i' your tail,

Address to the Unco Guid. As Burns was no saint himself, he had a warm pity for the sinner and a hearty dislike for the moral hypocrite. The satirical address to the unco guid, or rigidly righteous, is a defense of the erring and an attack on the thin-blooded plaster saints who would condemn them. The text which he paraphrases at the beginning of the poem runs thus: "Be not righteous over much, neither make thyself over wise; why shouldest thou destroy thyself?" *dight, winnowed. **pyles**, grains. **caff**, chaff. **daffin**, fun. 5. **weel-gaun**, well-going. 7. **happer**, hopper. 9. **core**, corps. 11. **douce**, sweet. 12. **glaikit**, giddy. 15. **donsie**, unlucky. 18. **niffer**, exchange. 23. **lave**, rest, remainder.

Right on ye scud your seaway;
But in the teeth o' baith to sail,
It makes an unco leeway.

See Social life and Glee sit down,
All joyous and unthinking,
Till, quite transmogrified, they're grown
Debauchery and Drinking.
O would they stay to calculate
Th' eternal consequences;
Or your more dreaded hell to state,
Damnation of expenses!

Ye high, exalted, virtuous Dames,
Tied up in godly laces,
Before ye gie poor Frailty names,
Suppose a change o' cases;
A dear loved lad, convenience snug,
A treacherous inclination—
But, let me whisper i' your lug,
Ye're aiblins nae temptation.

Then gently scan your brother man,
Still gentler sister woman;
Though they may gang a kennin wrang,
To step aside is human.
One point must still be greatly dark,
The moving why they do it;
And just as lamely can ye mark
How far perhaps they rue it.

Who made the heart, 'tis He alone
Decidedly can try us;
He knows each chord, its various tone,
Each spring, its various bias.
Then at the balance let's be mute,
We never can adjust it;
What's done we partly may compute,
But know not what's resisted.

(1787)

HOLY WILLIE'S PRAYER

O Thou, wha in the heavens dost dwell,
Wha, as it pleases best thysel',
Sends ane to heaven and ten to hell,
A' for thy glory,
And no for ony guid or ill
They've done afore thee!

I bless and praise thy matchless might,
Whan thousands thou hast left in night,
That I am here afore thy sight,
For gifts an' grace
A burnin' an' a shinin' light,
To a' this place.

What was I, or my generation,
That I should get sic exaltation?
I, wha deserve most just damnation,
For broken laws,
Sax thousand years 'fore my creation,
Through Adam's cause.

When frae my mither's womb I fell,
Thou might hae plungéd me in hell,
To gnash my gums, to weep and wail,
In burnin' lakes,
Where damnéd devils roar and yell,
Chained to their stakes;

Yet I am here a chosen sample,
To show thy grace is great and ample;
I'm here a pillar in thy temple,
Strong as a rock,
A guide, a buckler, an example
To a' thy flock.

O Lord, thou kens what zeal I bear,
When drinkers drink, and swearers swear,
And singin' there and dancin' here,
Wi' great an' sma';
For I am keepit by thy fear
Free frae them a'.

But yet, O Lord! confess I must
At times I'm fashed wi' fleshy lust;
An' sometimes too, in warldly trust,
Vile self gets in;
But thou remembers we are dust,
Defiled in sin.

. . . . . .

47. **lug**, ear. 48. **aiblins**, possibly. 51. **kennin**, a little.

Holy Willie's Prayer. Burns's explanation of the occasion of this vivid satire is as follows: "Argument—Holy Willie was a rather oldish bachelor elder, in the parish of Mauchline, and much and justly famed for that polemical chattering which ends in tippling orthodoxy, and for that spiritual bawdry which refines to liquorish devotion. In a sessional process with a gentleman in Mauchline—a Mr. Gavin Hamilton—*Holy Willie* and his priest, Father Auld, after full hearing in the Presbytery of Ayr, came off but second best, owing partly to the oratorical powers of Mr. Robert Aiken, Mr. Hamilton's counsel; but chiefly to Mr. Hamilton's being one of the most irreproachable and truly respectable characters in the country. On losing his process, the Muse overheard him at his devotions as follows."

The dramatic monologue which resulted is earlier than Browning's similar self-revelations of human nature but is equally vivid. 3. **Sends ane to heaven**, etc. The Calvinistic doctrine of foreordination appears here and in the succeeding stanzas; Holy Willie is sure that he had been predestined not only to be saved himself but to be a shining example to the rest. 18. **Adam's cause**, the doctrine of original sin. 38. **fashed**, troubled.

May be thou lets this fleshly thorn
Beset thy servant e'en and morn
Lest he owre high and proud should turn,
That he's sae gifted; 46
If sae, thy hand maun e'en be borne,
Until thou lift it.

Lord, bless thy chosen in this place,
For here thou hast a chosen race; 50
But God confound their stubborn face,
And blast their name,
Wha bring thy elders to disgrace
An' public shame.

Lord, mind Gawn Hamilton's deserts, 55
He drinks, an' swears, an' plays at cartes,
Yet has sae mony takin' arts
Wi' grit an' sma',
Frae God's ain priest the people's hearts
He steals awa'. 60

An' when we chastened him therefor,
Thou kens how he bred sic a splore
As set the warld in a roar
O' laughin' at us;
Curse thou his basket and his store, 65
Kail and potatoes.

Lord, hear my earnest cry an' prayer,
Against that presbyt'ry o' Ayr;
Thy strong right hand, Lord, make it bare
Upo' their heads; 70
Lord, weigh it down, and dinna spare,
For their misdeeds.

O Lord my God, that glib-tongued Aiken,
My very heart and soul are quakin', 74
To think how we stood sweatin', shakin',
An' filled wi' dread,
While he, wi' hingin' lips and snakin',
Held up his head.

Lord, in the day of vengeance try him;
Lord, visit them wha did employ him,
And pass not in thy mercy by them, 81
Nor hear their prayer;
But, for thy people's sake, destroy them,
And dinna spare.

But, Lord, remember me and mine 85
Wi' mercies temp'ral and divine,
That I for gear and grace may shine
Excelled by nane,
And a' the glory shall be thine,
Amen, Amen!

1785 (AFTER 1796)

55. **Gawn Hamilton**, Burns's landlord, who had been tried by the session and acquitted. 58. **grit**, great. 62. **splore**, row. 66. **Kail**, cabbage. 73. **Aiken**, Hamilton's lawyer. 77. **hingin' . . . snakin'**, hanging . . . sneering.

CAROLINA OLIPHANT, LADY NAIRNE (1766-1845)

THE LAND O' THE LEAL

I'm wearin' awa', John,
Like snaw-wreaths in thaw, John,
I'm wearin' awa'
To the land o' the leal.
There's nae sorrow there, John, 5
There's neither cauld nor care, John,
The day is aye fair
In the land o' the leal.

Our bonnie bairn's there, John,
She was baith gude and fair, John; 10
And, oh! we grudged her sair
To the land o' the leal.
But sorrow's sel' wears past, John,
And joy's a-comin' fast, John,
The joy that's aye to last 15
In the land o' the leal.

Sae dear that joy was bought, John,
Sae free the battle fought, John,
That sinfu' man e'er brought
To the land o' the leal. 20
Oh! dry your glistening e'e, John,
My soul langs to be free, John,
And angels beckon me
To the land o' the leal.

Oh! haud ye leal and true, John, 25
Your day it's wearin' through, John,
And I'll welcome you
To the land o' the leal.
Now fare-ye-weel, my ain John,
This warld's cares are vain, John; 30
We'll meet, and we'll be fain
In the land o' the leal.

1798 (1804)

87. **gear**, goods, property.
The Land o' the Leal. Title. **leal**, faithful.

NINETEENTH CENTURY

NOTE

The nineteenth century opened with a blaze of poetic imagination, stimulated by the French and Industrial Revolutions. The poets of the Romantic Movement were strongly individualistic, but each had a single and rather clearly-defined ideal. By 1840, when the Victorian Age commenced, and the fervor of the Romantic Movement began to diminish before the scientific and industrial age, lyric poetry became a medium for expressing two views of life—on the one hand the imaginative and idealistic, and on the other the psychological and realistic. Tennyson and Swinburne well represent the former group; Browning and Kipling, the latter. English lyric poetry developed in this general manner until the World War brought about once more that union of realism and idealism which was characteristic in the Romantic Movement of Wordsworth's day.

*WILLIAM WORDSWORTH
(1770-1850)

LINES

COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY, ON REVISITING THE BANKS OF THE WYE DURING A TOUR
JULY 13, 1798

Five years have passed; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain springs
With a soft inland murmur.—Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs, 5
That on a wild, secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
The day is come when I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view 10
These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,
Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
These hedgerows, hardly hedgerows, little lines 15
Of sportive wood run wild; these pastoral farms,
Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!
With some uncertain notice, as might seem
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods, 20
Or of some hermit's cave, where by his fire
The hermit sits alone.
These beauteous forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye;
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din 25
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration—feelings, too,
Of unremembered pleasure; such, perhaps, 31
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust, 35
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,

*Wordsworth spent most of his life in the Lake District in the northwest of England, near the Scottish border. It was in this general region that the author of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* had lived. Wordsworth perceived the glories of eternity in what had hitherto been called the common things of nature. His theory of poetry is contained in the *Preface* to the *Lyrical Ballads* (see page II-434). Notice throughout the poetry of Wordsworth three general attitudes toward nature: the youthful physical joy at being with nature, the mature emotional joy of contemplation and memory, and the spiritual rapture of one who perceives in nature the presence of God. All of these attitudes are revealed in "Tintern Abbey" and "Intimations of Immortality."

Tintern Abbey. "No poem of mine was composed under circumstances more pleasant for me to remember than this. I began it upon leaving Tintern, after crossing the Wye, and concluded it just as I was entering Bristol in the evening, after a ramble of four or five days, with my sister. Not a line of it was altered, and not any part of it written down till I reached Bristol. It was published almost immediately after in the little volume of which so much has been said in these Notes." (Wordsworth's comment on this poem, which was published in the *Lyrical Ballads*, 1798.)

In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world, 40
Is lightened—that serene and blessed mood
In which the affections gently lead us on—
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul; 46
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.
If this
Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft—
In darkness and amid the many shapes
Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir 52
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart—
How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
O silvan Wye! thou wanderer through the woods, 56
How often has my spirit turned to thee!
And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,
With many recognitions dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity, 60
The picture of the mind revives again;
While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
That in this moment there is life and food
For future years. And so I dare to hope,
Though changed, no doubt, from what I was when first 66
I came among these hills; when like a roe
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
Wherever Nature led; more like a man 70
Flying from something that he dreads, than one
Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then
(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
And their glad animal movements all gone by)
To me was all in all.—I cannot paint 75
What then I was. The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion; the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colors and their forms, were then to me
An appetite; a feeling and a love, 80
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn, nor murmur; other gifts 86
Have followed; for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompense. For I have learned
To look on Nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes 90
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime 95
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
A motion and a spirit, that impels 100
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still

56. **silvan Wye.** The Wye runs along the southern border of Wales before emptying into the sound made by the Severn River. Compare the feeling for nature in this poem with "Corinna's Going a-Maying" (page 381), "L'Allegro" (page 390), "From the Brake the Nightingale" (page 601), "The Garden of Proserpine" (page 595), "Sing Me a Song of a Lad That Is Gone" (page 598), "The Feet of the Young Men" (page 607), "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" (page 633), "Hit" (page 622), and "In Flanders Fields" (page 617).

A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains; and of all that we behold
From this green earth; of all the mighty world 105
Of eye, and ear—both what they half create,
And what perceive; well pleased to recognize
In Nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul 110
Of all my moral being.
Nor perchance,
If I were not thus taught, should I the more
Suffer my genial spirits to decay;
For thou art with me here upon the banks
Of this fair river; thou my dearest friend, 115
My dear, dear friend; and in thy voice I catch
The language of my former heart, and read
My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
May I behold in thee what I was once,
My dear, dear sister! and this prayer I make, 121
Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead 124
From joy to joy; for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all 130
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk; 135
And let the misty mountain-winds be free
To blow against thee; and in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure; when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms 140
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh! then,
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me, 145
And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance—
If I should be where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
Of past existence—wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream 150
We stood together; and that I, so long
A worshiper of Nature, hither came
Unwearied in that service; rather say
With warmer love—oh! with far deeper zeal
Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget 155
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake!

(1798)

THERE WAS A BOY

There was a Boy; ye knew him well, ye cliffs
And islands of Winander!—many a time
At evening, when the earliest stars began
To move along the edges of the hills,
Rising or setting, would he stand alone, 5
Beneath the trees, or by the glimmering lake;

There Was a Boy. During the winter of 1799 the Wordsworths were in Germany. This and the following four poems are among many written at this time.

And there, with fingers interwoven, both hands
Pressed closely palm to palm and to his mouth
Uplifted, he, as through an instrument
Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls, 10
That they might answer him.—And they would shout
Across the watery vale, and shout again,
Responsive to his call—with quivering peals,
And long halloos, and screams, and echoes loud
Redoubled and redoubled; concourse wild 15
Of jocund din! And when there came a pause
Of silence such as baffled his best skill,
Then, sometimes, in that silence, while he hung
Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprise
Has carried far into his heart the voice 20
Of mountain torrents; or the visible scene
Would enter unawares into his mind
With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
Its woods, and that uncertain heaven received
Into the bosom of the steady lake. 25

This Boy was taken from his mates, and died
In childhood, ere he was full twelve years old.
Preëminent in beauty is the vale
Where he was born and bred; the churchyard hangs
Upon a slope above the village school; 30
And, through that churchyard when my way has led
On summer evenings, I believe that there
A long half-hour together I have stood
Mute—looking at the grave in which he lies! (1800)

34. Cf. "Rose Aylmer" (page 480) and "Little Boy Blue" (page 677). The poet feels wonder and questioning that youth should suffer, but, like Bridges in "Pater Filio" (page 605) and Anderson in "The Breaking" (page 705), he expresses no irony, as do Hardy in *Satires of Circumstance* and Masters in *Spoon River Anthology*.

INFLUENCE OF NATURAL OBJECTS

IN CALLING FORTH AND STRENGTHENING THE IMAGINATION IN BOYHOOD AND EARLY YOUTH

Wisdom and Spirit of the universe!
Thou Soul, that art the Eternity of thought!
And giv'st to forms and images a breath
And everlasting motion! not in vain,
By day or starlight, thus from my first dawn 5
Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me
The passions that build up our human soul;
Not with the mean and vulgar works of Man;
But with high objects, with enduring things,
With life and nature; purifying thus 10
The elements of feeling and of thought,
And sanctifying by such discipline
Both pain and fear—until we recognize
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.

Nor was this fellowship vouchsafed to me 15
With stinted kindness. In November days,
When vapors rolling down the valleys made
A lonely scene more lonesome; among woods
At noon; and 'mid the calm of summer nights,
When, by the margin of the trembling lake, 20
Beneath the gloomy hills, homeward I went
In solitude, such intercourse was mine.
Mine was it in the fields both day and night,
And by the waters, all the summer long.
And in the frosty season, when the sun 25
Was set, and, visible for many a mile,
The cottage windows through the twilight blazed,

Influence of Natural Objects. Contrast the attitude here shown with that of Addison in the "Hymn" (page 412), of Holmes in "A Sun-Day Hymn" (page 643), or Whittier in "The Barefoot Boy" (page 644).

I heeded not the summons. Happy time
It was indeed for all of us; for me 29
It was a time of rapture! Clear and loud
The village clock tolled six—I wheeled about,
Proud and exulting like an untired horse
That cares not for his home.—All shod with steel,
We hissed along the polished ice, in games
Confederate, imitative of the chase 35
And woodland pleasures—the resounding horn,
The pack loud-chiming, and the hunted hare.
So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
And not a voice was idle. With the din
Smitten, the precipices rang aloud; 40
The leafless trees and every icy crag
Tinkled like iron; while far-distant hills
Into the tumult sent an alien sound
Of melancholy, not unnoticed, while the stars,
Eastward, were sparkling clear, and in the west 45
The orange sky of evening died away.

Not seldom from the uproar I retired
Into a silent bay, or sportively
Glanced sideway, leaving the tumultuous throng,
To cut across the reflex of a star; 50
Image, that, flying still before me, gleamed
Upon the glassy plain. And oftentimes,
When we had given our bodies to the wind,
And all the shadowy banks on either side
Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still 55
The rapid line of motion, then at once
Have I, reclining back upon my heels,
Stopped short; yet still the solitary cliffs
Wheeled by me—even as if the earth had rolled
With visible motion her diurnal round!
Behind me did they stretch in solemn train, 61
Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched
Till all was tranquil as a summer sea.

(1809)

SHE DWELT AMONG THE UNTRODDEN WAYS

She dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A maid whom there were none to praise
And very few to love;

A violet by a mossy stone 5
Half hidden from the eye!
Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be; 10
But she is in her grave, and, oh!
The difference to me!

(1800)

I TRAVELED AMONG UNKNOWN MEN

I traveled among unknown men,
In lands beyond the sea;
Nor, England! did I know till then
What love I bore to thee.

'Tis past, that melancholy dream! 5
Nor will I quit thy shore
A second time; for still I seem
To love thee more and more.

Among thy mountains did I feel
The joy of my desire; 10
And she I cherished turned her wheel
Beside an English fire.

Thy mornings showed, thy nights concealed,
The bowers where Lucy played;
And thine, too, is the last green field 15
That Lucy's eyes surveyed.

(1807)

THREE YEARS SHE GREW IN SUN AND SHOWER

Three years she grew in sun and shower.
Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower

Three Years She Grew. Cf. "Love in the Valley" (page 571).

On earth was never sown;
This child I to myself will take;
She shall be mine, and I will make 5
A lady of my own.

"Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse; and with me
The girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower, 10
Shall feel an overseeing power
To kindle or restrain.

"She shall be sportive as the fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn
Or up the mountain springs; 15
And hers shall be the breathing balm,
And hers the silence and the calm
Of mute, insensate things.

"The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her; for her the willow bend; 20
Nor shall she fail to see,
Even in the motions of the storm,
Grace that shall mold the maiden's form
By silent sympathy.

"The stars of midnight shall be dear 25
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face. 30

"And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell;
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
While she and I together live 35
Here in this happy dell."

Thus Nature spake.—The work was done.—
How soon my Lucy's race was run!
She died, and left to me
This heath, this calm and quiet scene; 40
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

(1800)

A SLUMBER DID MY SPIRIT SEAL

A slumber did my spirit seal;
I had no human fears—
She seemed a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force; 5
She neither hears nor sees;
Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,
With rocks, and stones, and trees.

(1800)

MY HEART LEAPS UP WHEN I BEHOLD

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky.
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old, 5
Or let me die!
The Child is father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

(1807)

RESOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE

There was a roaring in the wind all night;
The rain came heavily and fell in floods;
But now the sun is rising calm and bright;
The birds are singing in the distant woods;
Over his own sweet voice the stock-dove broods; 5
The jay makes answer as the magpie chatters;
And all the air is filled with pleasant noise of waters.

All things that love the sun are out of doors;
The sky rejoices in the morning's birth;
The grass is bright with raindrops—on the moors 10

Resolution and Independence. Social unrest now creeps into English lyric poetry. To note how far it has run compare this poem and "The Song of the Shirt" (page 476) with "Chicago" (page 708), "Lost" (page 708), and "Smoke and Steel" (page 709).

The hare is running races in her mirth;
And with her feet she from the plashy earth
Raises a mist; that, glittering in the sun,
Runs with her all the way, wherever she doth run.

I was a Traveler then upon the moor; 15
I saw the hare that raced about with joy;
I heard the woods and distant waters roar;
Or heard them not, as happy as a boy.
The pleasant season did my heart employ;
My old remembrances went from me wholly; 20
And all the ways of men, so vain and melancholy.

But, as it sometimes chanceth, from the might
Of joy in minds that can no further go,
As high as we have mounted in delight
In our dejection do we sink as low; 25
To me that morning did it happen so;
And fears and fancies thick upon me came;
Dim sadness, and blind thoughts, I knew not, nor could name.

I heard the skylark warbling in the sky;
And I bethought me of the playful hare. 30
Even such a happy child of earth am I;
Even as these blissful creatures do I fare;
Far from the world I walk, and all from care;
But there may come another day to me—
Solitude, pain of heart, distress, and poverty. 35

My whole life I have lived in pleasant thought,
As if life's business were a summer mood;
As if all needful things would come unsought
To genial faith, still rich in genial good;
But how can he expect that others should 40
Build for him, sow for him, and at his call
Love him, who for himself will take no heed at all?

I thought of Chatterton, the marvelous Boy,
The sleepless Soul that perished in his pride;
Of him who walked in glory and in joy, 45
Following his plow, along the mountain-side.
By our own spirits we are deified;
We Poets in our youth begin in gladness;
But thereof come in the end despondency and madness.

Now, whether it were by peculiar grace, 50
A leading from above, a something given,
Yet it befell, that, in this lonely place,
When I with these untoward thoughts had striven,
Beside a pool bare to the eye of heaven
I saw a man before me unawares— 55
The oldest man he seemed that ever wore gray hairs.

As a huge stone is sometimes seen to lie
Couched on the bald top of an eminence,
Wonder to all who do the same espy,
By what means it could thither come, and whence; 60
So that it seems a thing endued with sense—
Like a sea-beast crawled forth, that on a shelf
Of rock or sand reposeth, there to sun itself—

Such seemed this man, not all alive nor dead,
Nor all asleep, in his extreme old age. 65
His body was bent double, feet and head
Coming together in life's pilgrimage;
As if some dire constraint of pain, or rage
Of sickness felt by him in times long past,
A more than human weight upon his frame had cast. 70

43. **Chatterton**, a young poet (1752-1770) of great promise, who committed suicide because he could get no recognition for his work. The poets of the Romantic Movement were often despairing. Cf. "When I Have Fears" (page 505), or "Ode to the West Wind" (page 489).
45. **him**, Robert Burns.

Himself he propped, limbs, body, and pale face,
Upon a long gray staff of shaven wood.
And, still as I drew near with gentle pace,
Upon the margin of that moorish flood
Motionless as a cloud the old man stood, 75
That heareth not the loud winds when they call,
And moveth all together, if it move at all.

At length, himself unsettling, he the pond
Stirred with his staff, and fixedly did look
Upon that muddy water, which he conned, 80
As if he had been reading in a book.
And now a stranger's privilege I took;
And, drawing to his side, to him did say,
"This morning gives us promise of a glorious day."

A gentle answer did the old man make, 85
In courteous speech, which forth he slowly drew;
And him with further words I thus bespake:
"What occupation do you there pursue?
This is a lonesome place for one like you."
Ere he replied a flash of mild surprise 90
Broke from the sable orbs of his yet vivid eyes.

His words came feebly, from a feeble chest,
But each in solemn order followed each,
With something of a lofty utterance drest—
Choice word and measured phrase, above the reach 95
Of ordinary men; a stately speech,
Such as grave livers do in Scotland use,
Religious men, who give to God and man their dues.

He told, that to these waters he had come
To gather leeches, being old and poor; 100
Employment hazardous and wearisome!
And he had many hardships to endure.
From pond to pond he roamed, from moor to moor,
Housing, with God's good help, by choice or chance;
And in this way he gained an honest maintenance. 105

The old man still stood talking by my side;
But now his voice to me was like a stream
Scarce heard; nor word from word could I divide;
And the whole body of the man did seem
Like one whom I had met with in a dream; 110
Or like a man from some far region sent,
To give me human strength, by apt admonishment.

My former thoughts returned: the fear that kills;
And hope that is unwilling to be fed;
Cold, pain, and labor, and all fleshly ills; 115
And mighty poets in their misery dead.
—Perplexed, and longing to be comforted,
My question eagerly did I renew,
"How is it that you live, and what is it you do?"

He with a smile did then his words repeat, 120
And said that, gathering leeches, far and wide
He traveled; stirring thus about his feet
The waters of the pools where they abide.
"Once I could meet with them on every side;
But they have dwindled long by slow decay; 125
Yet still I persevere, and find them where I may."

While he was talking thus, the lonely place,
The old man's shape, and speech—all troubled me.
In my mind's eye I seemed to see him pace
About the weary moors continually, 130

Wandering about alone and silently.
While I these thoughts within myself pursued,
He, having made a pause, the same discourse renewed.

And soon with this he other matter blended,
Cheerfully uttered, with demeanor kind, 135
But stately in the main; and when he ended,
I could have laughed myself to scorn, to find
In that decrepit man so firm a mind.
"God," said I, "be my help and stay secure;
I'll think of the leech-gatherer on the lonely moor!" (1807)

THE SOLITARY REAPER

Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts and binds the grain, 5
And sings a melancholy strain;
O listen! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands 10
Of travelers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands.
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In springtime from the cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas 15
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?—
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago. 20
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of today?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again?

Whate'er the theme, the maiden sang 25
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending—
I listened, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill, 30
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more. (1807)

AT THE GRAVE OF BURNS, 1803

SEVEN YEARS AFTER HIS DEATH

I shiver, Spirit fierce and bold,
At thought of what I now behold;
As vapors breathed from dungeons cold
Strike pleasure dead,
So sadness comes from out the mold 5
Where Burns is laid.

And have I then thy bones so near,
And thou forbidden to appear?
As if it were thyself that's here
I shrink with pain; 10
And both my wishes and my fear
Alike are vain.

Off weight—nor press on weight!—away
Dark thoughts!—they came, but not to stay;
With chastened feelings would I pay 15
The tribute due
To him, and aught that hides his clay
From mortal view.

Fresh as the flower, whose modest worth
He sang, his genius "glinted" forth, 20
Rose like a star that touching earth,
For so it seems,
Doth glorify its humble birth
With matchless beams.

The piercing eye, the thoughtful brow, 25
The struggling heart, where be they now?—
Full soon the aspirant of the plow,
The prompt, the brave,
Slept, with the obscurest, in the low
And silent grave. 30

I mourned with thousands, but as one
More deeply grieved, for He was gone

At the Grave of Burns. Written in the tail rime stanza of Burns. The quotations and allusions are taken from his poems.

Whose light I hailed when first it shone,
And showed my youth
How verse may build a princely throne 35
On humble truth.

Alas! where'er the current tends,
Regret pursues and with it blends—
Huge Criffel's hoary top ascends
By Skiddaw seen— 40
Neighbors we were, and loving friends
We might have been;

True friends though diversely inclined;
But heart with heart and mind with mind,
Where the main fibers are entwined, 45
Through Nature's skill,
May even by contraries be joined
More closely still.

The tear will start, and let it flow;
Thou "poor Inhabitant below" 50
At this dread moment—even so—
Might we together
Have sate and talked where gowans blow,
Or on wild heather.

What treasures would have then been placed 55
Within my reach; of knowledge graced
By fancy what a rich repast!
But why go on?—
Oh! spare to sweep, thou mournful blast,
His grave grass-grown. 60

There, too, a son, his joy and pride
(Not three weeks past the stripling died),
Lies gathered to his father's side,
Soul-moving sight!
Yet one to which is not denied 65
Some sad delight;

For he is safe, a quiet bed
Hath early found among the dead,
Harbored where none can be misled,
Wronged, or distrest; 70
And surely here it may be said
That such are blest.

39. **Criffel**, a mountain near Dumfries, where Burns lived. 40. **Skiddaw**, a mountain in the Lake District, where Wordsworth lived. 53. **gowan**, mountain daisy.

And, oh! for Thee, by pitying grace
Checked ofttimes in a devious race,
May He who halloweth the place 75
Where man is laid
Receive thy spirit in the embrace
For which it prayed!

Sighing I turned away; but ere
Night fell I heard, or seemed to hear, 80
Music that sorrow comes not near,
A ritual hymn,
Chaunted in love that casts out fear
By Seraphim. (1845)

SHE WAS A PHANTOM OF DELIGHT

She was a phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight;
A lovely apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament;
Her eyes as stars of twilight fair; 5
Like twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From Maytime and the cheerful dawn;
A dancing shape, an image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and waylay. 10

I saw her upon nearer view,
A spirit, yet a woman, too!
Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin liberty;
A countenance in which did meet 15
Sweet records, promises as sweet;
A creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food;
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles. 20

And now I see with eyes serene
The very pulse of the machine:
A being breathing thoughtful breath,
A traveler between life and death;
The reason firm, the temperate will, 25
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
A perfect woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a spirit still, and bright
With something of angelic light.
(1807)

She Was a Phantom of Delight. Wordsworth wrote this poem as a by-product of "The Solitary Reaper" (page 460).

I WANDERED LONELY AS A CLOUD

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of golden daffodils,
Beside the lake, beneath the trees, 5
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay; 10
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they
Outdid the sparkling waves in glee—
A poet could not but be gay 15
In such a jocund company.
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought.

For oft when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood, 20
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude,
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

(1807)

TO A SKY-LARK

Up with me! up with me into the clouds!
For thy song, Lark, is strong;
Up with me! up with me into the clouds!
Singing, singing,
With clouds and sky about thee ringing, 5
Lift me, guide me till I find
That spot which seems so to thy mind!
I have walked through wildernesses dreary,
And today my heart is weary;
Had I now the wings of a faëry, 10
Up to thee would I fly.
There is madness about thee, and joy divine
In that song of thine;
Lift me, guide me high and high
To thy banqueting place in the sky. 15

Joyous as morning,
Thou art laughing and scorning;
Thou hast a nest for thy love and thy rest,
And, though little troubled with sloth,
Drunken Lark! thou wouldst be loath 20
To be such a traveler as I.
Happy, happy Liver,
With a soul as strong as a mountain river
Pouring out praise to the Almighty Giver,
Joy and jollity be with us both! 25

Alas! my journey, rugged and uneven,
Through prickly moors or dusty ways must wind;
But hearing thee, or others of thy kind,
As full of gladness and as free of heaven,
I, with my fate contented, will plod on, 30
And hope for higher raptures, when life's day is done.

(1807)

TO A SKY-LARK

Ethereal minstrel! pilgrim of the sky!
Dost thou despise the earth where cares abound?
Or, while the wings aspire, are heart and eye
Both with thy nest upon the dewy ground?
Thy nest which thou canst drop into at will, 5
Those quivering wings composed, that music still!

Leave to the nightingale her shady wood;
A privacy of glorious light is thine;

I Wandered Lonely As a Cloud. Cf. "In the Highlands" (page 598) and "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" (page 633).

To a Sky-lark. Skylark poems abound in nineteenth-century English poetry, and should be compared with the mocking-bird poems of the American Southern poets or the thrush poems of the Northern poets. All should be contrasted with "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" (page 662) by Whitman, for his treatment was novel and influential.

To a Sky-lark. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries preferred the retiring nightingale, but the nineteenth century preferred the skylark for the reasons which Wordsworth gives.

Whence thou dost pour upon the world a flood
Of harmony, with instinct more divine; 10
Type of the wise who soar, but never roam;
True to the kindred points of heaven and home! (1827)

ODE TO DUTY

Stern Daughter of the Voice of God!
O Duty! if that name thou love,
Who art a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring, and reprove;
Thou who art victory and law 5
When empty terrors overawe;
From vain temptations dost set free;
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity!

There are who ask not if thine eye
Be on them; who, in love and truth, 10
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth;
Glad hearts! without reproach or blot;
Who do thy work, and know it not.
Oh, if through confidence misplaced they fail, 15
Thy saving arms, dread Power! around them cast.

Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security. 20
And they a blissful course may hold
Even now, who, not unwisely bold,
Live in the spirit of this creed;
Yet seek thy firm support, according to their need.

I, loving freedom, and untried, 25
No sport of every random gust,
Yet being to myself a guide,
Too blindly have reposed my trust.
And oft, when in my heart was heard
Thy timely mandate, I deferred 30
The task, in smoother walks to stray;
But thee, I now would serve more strictly, if I may.

Through no disturbance of my soul,
Or strong compunction in me wrought,
I supplicate for thy control; 35
But in the quietness of thought.
Me this unchartered freedom tires;
I feel the weight of chance desires.
My hopes no more must change their name; 39
I long for a repose that ever is the same.

Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face. 44
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds,
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
And the most ancient heavens, through thee, are fresh and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power!
I call thee. I myself commend 50
Unto thy guidance from this hour;
Oh, let my weakness have an end!
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice;
The confidence of reason give; 55
And in the light of truth thy bondman let me live! (1807)

Ode to Duty. Cf. "Hymn to Adversity" (page 418).

CHARACTER OF THE HAPPY WARRIOR

Who is the happy Warrior? Who is he
That every man in arms should wish to be?
It is the generous Spirit, who, when brought
Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought
Upon the plan that pleased his boyish thought; 5
Whose high endeavors are an inward light
That makes the path before him always bright;
Who, with a natural instinct to discern
What knowledge can perform, is diligent to learn;

Character of the Happy Warrior. A consummate expression in lyric poetry of the English ideal of life, which we have seen developing in other literary types.

Abides by this resolve, and stops not there, 10
But makes his moral being his prime care;
Who doomed to go in company with Pain,
And Fear, and Bloodshed, miserable train!
Turns his necessity to glorious gain;
In face of these doth exercise a power 15
Which is our human nature's highest dower;
Controls them and subdues, transmutes, bereaves,
Of their bad influence, and their good receives;
By objects, which might force the soul to abate
Her feeling, rendered more compassionate; 20
Is placable—because occasions rise
So often that demand such sacrifice;
More skillful in self-knowledge, even more pure,
As tempted more; more able to endure,
As more exposed to suffering and distress; 25
Thence, also, more alive to tenderness.
'Tis he whose law is reason; who depends
Upon that law as on the best of friends;
Whence, in a state where men are tempted still
To evil for a guard against worse ill, 30
And what in quality or act is best
Doth seldom on a right foundation rest,
He labors good on good to fix, and owes
To virtue every triumph that he knows;
Who, if he rise to station of command, 35
Rises by open means; and there will stand
On honorable terms, or else retire,
And in himself possess his own desire;
Who comprehends his trust, and to the same
Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim; 40
And therefore does not stoop, nor lie in wait
For wealth, or honors, or for worldly state;
Whom they must follow; on whose head must fall,
Like showers of manna, if they come at all;
Whose powers shed round him in the common strife, 45
Or mild concerns of ordinary life,
A constant influence, a peculiar grace;
But who, if he be called upon to face
Some awful moment to which Heaven has joined
Great issues, good or bad for human kind, 50
Is happy as a Lover; and attired
With sudden brightness, like a man inspired;
And, through the heat of conflict keeps the law
In calmness made, and sees what he foresaw;
Or if an unexpected call succeed, 55
Come when it will, is equal to the need.
He who, though thus endued as with a sense
And faculty for storm and turbulence,
Is yet a Soul whose master-bias leans
To homefelt pleasures and to gentle scenes; 60
Sweet images! which, wheresoe'er he be,
Are at his heart; and such fidelity
It is his darling passion to approve;
More brave for this that he hath much to love—
'Tis, finally, the Man, who, lifted high 65
Conspicuous object in a nation's eye,
Or left unthought-of in obscurity—
Who, with a toward or untoward lot,
Prosperous or adverse, to his wish or not,
Plays, in the many games of life, that one 70
Where what he most doth value must be won.
Whom neither shape of danger can dismay,
Nor thought of tender happiness betray;
Who, not content that former worth stand fast,
Looks forward, persevering to the last, 75
From well to better, daily self-surpast.
Who, whether praise of him must walk the earth
Forever, and to noble deeds give birth,
Or he must fall to sleep without his fame,
And leave a dead, unprofitable name, 80

Finds comfort in himself and in his cause;
And, while the mortal mist is gathering, draws
His breath in confidence of Heaven's applause—
This is the happy Warrior; this is He
Whom every Man in arms should wish to be. (1807)

ODE

INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

"The Child is Father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety."

There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Appareled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream. 5
It is not now as it hath been of yore—
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

The rainbow comes and goes, 10
And lovely is the rose;
The moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare;
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair; 15
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath passed away a glory from the earth.

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
And while the young lambs bound, 20
As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of grief;
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong.
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep; 25
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong;
I hear the echoes through the mountains throng,
The winds come to me from the fields of sleep,
And all the earth is gay;
Land and sea 30
Give themselves up to jollity,
And with the heart of May
Doth every beast keep holiday—
Thou child of joy,
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy shepherd-boy! 35

Ye blesséd creatures, I have heard the call
Ye to each other make; I see
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee.
My heart is at your festival,
My head hath its coronal, 40
The fullness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.
O evil day! if I were sullen
While Earth herself is adorning,
This sweet May-morning,
And the children are culling 45
On every side,
In a thousand valleys far and wide,
Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm,
And the babe leaps up on his mother's arm—
I hear, I hear, with joy I hear! 50
—But there's a tree, of many, one,
A single field which I have looked upon;
Both of them speak of something that is gone.
The pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat: 55
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting, 60

Ode. Intimations of Immortality. The reminiscence of heaven in this ode is derived from the Platonic theory that man tends to forget his divine origin, and becomes blinded by experience. Cf. "The Vision of Mirza" (page II-422) and "Self-Deception" (page 578).

And cometh from afar;
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home. 65
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing boy,
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy; 70
The youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the man perceives it die away, 75
And fade into the light of common day.

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
And, even with something of a mother's mind,
And no unworthy aim, 80
The homely nurse doth all she can
To make her foster-child, her inmate man,
Forget the glories he hath known,
And that imperial palace whence he came.

Behold the child among his new-born blisses, 85
A six years' darling of a pygmy size!
See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
With light upon him from his father's eyes!
See, at his feet, some little plan or chart, 90
Some fragment from his dream of human life,
Shaped by himself with newly-learnéd art;
A wedding or a festival,
A mourning or a funeral;
And this hath now his heart, 95
And unto this he frames his song;
Then will he fit his tongue
To dialogues of business, love, or strife.
But it will not be long
Ere this be thrown aside, 100
And with new joy and pride
The little actor cons another part;
Filling from time to time his "humorous stage"
With all the persons, down to palsied Age,
That Life brings with her in her equipage; 105
As if his whole vocation
Were endless imitation.

Thou whose exterior semblance doth belie
Thy soul's immensity;
Thou best philosopher, who yet dost keep 110
Thy heritage, thou eye among the blind,
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
Haunted forever by the eternal mind—
Mighty prophet! Seer blest!
On whom those truths do rest, 115
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;
Thou, over whom thy immortality
Broods like the day, a master o'er a slave,
A presence which is not to be put by; 120
Thou little child, yet glorious in the might
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife? 125
Full soon thy soul shall have her earthly freight,
And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

O joy! that in our embers
Is something that doth live, 130
That Nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive!
The thought of our past years in me doth breed

Perpetual benediction; not indeed
For that which is most worthy to be blest— 135
Delight and liberty, the simple creed
Of childhood, whether busy or at rest,
With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast—
Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise; 140
But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a creature
Moving about in worlds not realized, 145
High instincts before which our mortal nature
Did tremble like a guilty thing surpised.
But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may, 150
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet a master light of all our seeing;
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake, 155
To perish never;
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavor,
Nor man nor boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy! 160
Hence in a season of calm weather
Though inland far we be,
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither, 165
And see the children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

Then sing, ye birds, sing, sing a joyous song!
And let the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound! 170
We in thought will join your throng,
Ye that pipe and ye that play,
Ye that through your hearts today
Feel the gladness of the May!
What though the radiance which was once so bright 175
Be now forever taken from my sight,
Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendor in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind; 180
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be;
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering;
In the faith that looks through death, 185
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

And O ye fountains, meadows, hills, and groves,
Forebode not any severing of our loves!
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;
I only have relinquished one delight 190
To live beneath your more habitual sway.
I love the brooks which down their channels fret,
Even more than when I tripped lightly as they;
The innocent brightness of a new-born day
Is lovely yet; 195
The clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober coloring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;
Another race hath been, and other palms are won.
Thanks to the human heart by which we live, 200
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

(1807)

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE, SEPT. 3, 1802

Earth has not anything to show more fair;
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This city now doth like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theaters, and temples lie 6
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendor valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will.
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still! (1807)

COMPOSED BY THE SEASIDE NEAR CALAIS, AUGUST, 1802

Fair Star of evening, Splendor of the west,
Star of my Country!—on the horizon's brink
Thou hangest, stooping, as might seem, to sink
On England's bosom; yet well pleased to rest,
Meanwhile, and be to her a glorious crest 5
Conspicuous to the nations. Thou, I think,
Should'st be my Country's emblem; and should'st wink,
Bright Star! with laughter on her banners, drest
In thy fresh beauty. There! that dusky spot
Beneath thee that is England; there she lies. 10
Blessings be on you both! one hope, one lot,
One life, one glory! I with many a fear
For my dear Country, many heartfelt sighs,
Among men who do not love her, linger here. (1807)

Composed upon Westminster Bridge. An early poetic reaction to a city. Cf. "I Scarcely Grieve, O Nature! at the Lot" (page 654), "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" (page 658), "Lost" (page 708), "Skyscrapers" (page 714), and "Broadway's Canyon" (page 715).

IT IS A BEAUTEOUS EVENING, CALM AND FREE

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free.
The holy time is quiet as a nun,
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity;
The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the sea; 5
Listen! the mighty Being is awake,
And doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder—everlastingly.
Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest with me here,
If thou appear untouched by solemn thought, 10
Thy nature is not therefore less divine;
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year,
And worship'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
God being with thee when we know it not. (1807)

LONDON, 1802

Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee; she is a fen
Of stagnant waters; altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower 5
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy Soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart;

It Is a Beauteous Evening. 9. **Dear Child**, a probable reference to Wordsworth's illegitimate French daughter, Caroline Vallon. 12. **Thou liest, etc.** Thou art in God's keeping.

Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea; 10
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.
(1807)

THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US

The world is too much with us: late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers.
Little we see in nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This sea that bares her bosom to the moon, 5
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not.—Great God! I'd rather be
A pagan suckled in a creed outworn; 10
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathéd horn.
(1807)

THOUGHT OF A BRITON ON THE SUBJUGATION OF SWITZERLAND

Two Voices are there; one is of the sea,
One of the mountains; each a mighty Voice.
In both from age to age thou didst rejoice;
They were thy chosen music, Liberty!
There came a Tyrant, and with holy glee 5
Thou fought'st against him; but hast vainly striven.
Thou from thy Alpine holds at length art driven,
Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee.
Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft;
Then cleave, O cleave to that which still is left; 10
For, high-souled Maid, what sorrow would it be
That mountain floods should thunder as before,
And ocean bellow from his rocky shore,
And neither awful voice be heard by thee!
(1807)

The World Is Too Much with Us. 13, 14. **Proteus . . . Triton,** Grecian sea-gods. The line is borrowed from Spenser's "Colin Clout."

Thought of a Briton. The French conquered Switzerland in 1798, and Napoleon annexed three cantons to France. He is referred to here as "the Tyrant."

THE TROSSACHS

There's not a nook within this solemn Pass,
But were an apt confessional for one
Taught by his summer spent, his autumn gone,
That life is but a tale of morning grass
Withered at eve. From scenes of art which chase 5
That thought away, turn, and with watchful eyes
Feed it 'mid Nature's old felicities,
Rocks, rivers, and smooth lakes more clear than glass
Untouched, unbreathed upon. Thrice-happy quest,
If from a golden perch of aspen spray 10
(October's workmanship to rival May)
The pensive warbler of the ruddy breast
That moral sweeten by a heaven-taught lay,
Lulling the year, with all its cares, to rest!
(1835)

The Trossachs. The Trossachs are rugged hills in Scotland near the English border.

*SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE
(1772-1834)

KUBLA KHAN

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree;
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea. 5
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round;

And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery. 11

But O, that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted 15
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momently was forced;
Amid whose swift, half-intermitted burst 20
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail.
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momently the sacred river.
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion 25
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean;
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war! 30

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device, 35
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw.
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she played, 40
Singing of Mount Abora.

*For Coleridge's theory of poetry see headnote on page 261. His poetry sprang partly from his ability to describe images created by his imagination from the observation of natural objects.

Kubla Khan. Coleridge's headnote, to the 1816 edition of this poem explains the poem and his own poetic career perfectly. As his inspiration failed, he said, like the Greek poet whom he quotes, "Tomorrow I shall sing sweetly," but tomorrow never came.

"In the summer of the year 1797 the author, then in ill health, had retired to a lonely farmhouse between Porlock and Linton, on the Exmoor confines of Somerset and Devonshire. In consequence of a slight indisposition an anodyne had been prescribed, from the effects of which he fell asleep in his chair at the moment that he was reading the following sentence, or words of the same substance, in Purchas's *Pilgrimage*: 'Here the Khan Kubla commanded a palace to be built, and a stately garden thereunto. And thus ten miles of fertile ground were inclosed with a wall.' The Author continued for about three hours in a profound sleep, at least of the external senses, during which time he has the most vivid confidence that he could not have composed less than from two to three hundred lines; if that indeed can be called composition in which all the images rose up before him as *things*, with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions, without any sensation or consciousness of effort. On awaking he appeared to himself to have a distinct recollection of the whole, and taking his pen, ink, and paper, instantly and eagerly wrote down the lines that are here preserved. At this moment he was unfortunately called out by a person on business from Porlock, and detained by him above an hour, and on his return to his room found, to his no small surprise and mortification, that though he still retained some vague and dim recollection of the general purport of the vision, yet, with the exception of some eight or ten scattered lines and images, all the rest had passed away, like the images on the surface of a stream into which a stone has been cast, but, alas! without the after restoration of the latter.

'Then all the charm
Is broken—all that phantom-world so fair
Vanishes, and a thousand circlets spread,
And each misshapes the other. Stay awhile,
Poor youth! who scarcely dar'st lift up thine eyes—
The stream will soon renew its smoothness, soon
The visions will return! And lo, he stays,
And soon the fragments dim of lovely forms
Come trembling back, unite, and now once more
The pool becomes a mirror.'

Yet from the still surviving recollections in his mind, the author has frequently purposed to finish for himself what had been originally, as it were, given to him. Αὔριον ἄδιον ἄσω, but the tomorrow is yet to come."

Kubla Khan was the founder of the Mongol dynasty in China in the thirteenth century. His actual capital was at Peking. The geography of Coleridge's poem is as vague as that of his source. This poem, like the lyrics from *Prometheus Unbound* (page 490), appeals to the intellectual imagination through the symbolism of clearly perceptible sensuous images.

Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me
That with music loud and long, 45
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair! 50
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

1797 (1816)

YOUTH AND AGE

Verse, a breeze 'mid blossoms straying,
Where Hope clung feeding, like a bee—
Both were mine! Life went a-Maying
With Nature, Hope, and Poesy,
When I was young! 5
When I was young?—Ah, woeful When!
Ah! for the change 'twixt Now and Then!
This breathing house not built with hands,
This body that does me grievous wrong,
O'er aëry cliffs and glittering sands, 10
How lightly *then* it flashed along—
Like those trim skiffs, unknown of yore,
On winding lakes and rivers wide,
That ask no aid of sail or oar,
That fear no spite of wind or tide! 15
Naught cared this body for wind or weather
When Youth and I lived in't together.

Flowers are lovely! Love is flower-like;
Friendship is a sheltering tree;
Oh, the joys, that came down shower-like, 20
Of Friendship, Love, and Liberty,
Ere I was old!
Ere I was old? Ah, woeful Ere,
Which tells me, Youth's no longer here!
O Youth! for years so many and sweet, 25
'Tis known that thou and I were one;
I'll think it but a fond conceit—
It cannot be that thou are gone!
Thy vesper-bell hath not yet tolled—
And thou wert aye a masker bold! 30
What strange disguise hast now put on,
To *make believe* that thou art gone?
I see these locks in silvery slips,
This drooping gait, this altered size;
But springtide blossoms on thy lips, 35
And tears take sunshine from thine eyes!
Life is but thought; so think I will
That Youth and I are housemates still.

Dewdrops are the gems of morning,
But the tears of mournful eve! 40
Where no hope is, life's a warning
That only serves to make us grieve,
When we are old!
That only serves to make us grieve
With oft and tedious taking-leave, 45
Like some poor nigh-related guest
That may not rudely be dismist;
Yet hath outstayed his welcome while,
And tells the jest without the smile.

(1832)

Youth and Age. The idea in this poem is Greek rather than English, for the English are not a race of hedonists. When the senses failed, the Greek wished to die, and much Greek elegiac poetry shows this attitude. Its influence on English poetry may be noted everywhere in Byron, and especially in his "We'll Go No More a-Roving" (page 482), in Tennyson's "The Lotos-Eaters" (page 526), in Swinburne's "The Garden of Proserpine" (page 595), in Rupert Brooke's "Menelaus and Helen" (page 620), and in Richard Le Gallienne's "An Echo from Horace" (page 626). The English point of view is better represented in Landor's "On His Seventy-fifth Birthday" (page 481), Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar" (page 547), Browning's "Prospice" (page 566), Stevenson's "Requiem" (page 599), and Masefield's "On Growing Old" (page 624).

CHARLES LAMB (1775-1834)

THE OLD FAMILIAR FACES

I have had playmates, I have had companions,
In my days of childhood, in my joyful schooldays—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have been laughing, I have been carousing,
Drinking late, sitting late, with my bosom cronies— 5
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

The Old Familiar Faces. Cf. "Departed Friends" (page 406).

I loved a Love once, fairest among women;
Closed are her doors on me, I must not see her—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have a friend—a kinder friend has no man; 10
Like an ingrate, I left my friend abruptly,
Left him, to muse on the old familiar faces.

Ghost-like I paced round the haunts of my childhood;
Earth seemed a desert I was bound to traverse,
Seeking to find the old familiar faces. 15

Friend of my bosom, thou more than a brother,
Why wert not thou born in my father's dwelling?
So might we talk of the old familiar faces—

How some they have died, and some they have left me,
And some are taken from me; all are departed— 20
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

(1798)

*SIR WALTER SCOTT (1771-1832)

PATRIOTISM

From THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL

Breathes there the man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
"This is my own, my native land!"
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned
As home his footsteps he hath turned 5
From wandering on a foreign strand?
If such there breathe, go, mark him well;
For him no minstrel raptures swell;
High though his titles, proud his name,
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim; 10
Despite those titles, power, and pelf,
The wretch, concentered all in self,
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
And, doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust from whence he sprung, 15
Unwept, unhonored, and unsung.

(1805)

*Scott revived the Celtic tradition in lyric poetry many years before the Celtic revival in Ireland. He was ably seconded by Moore.

Patriotism. Cf. "Fredome" (page 348).

HARP OF THE NORTH

From THE LADY OF THE LAKE

Harp of the North! that moldering long hast hung
On the witch-elm that shades Saint Fillan's spring,
And down the fitful breeze thy numbers flung,
Till envious ivy did around thee cling,
Muffling with verdant ringlet every string— 5
O minstrel Harp, still must thine accents sleep?
'Mid rustling leaves and fountains murmuring,
Still must thy sweeter sounds their silence keep,
Nor bid a warrior smile, nor teach a maid to weep?

Not thus, in ancient days of Caledon, 10
Was thy voice mute amid the festal crowd,
When lay of hopeless love, or glory won,
Aroused the fearful, or subdued the proud.
At each according pause was heard aloud
Thine ardent symphony sublime and high! 15
Fair dames and crested chiefs attention bowed;
For still the burden of thy minstrelsy
Was Knighthood's dauntless deed, and Beauty's matchless eye.

Harp of the North. This is the opening lyric of *The Lady of the Lake.* Cf. "The Harp That Once Through Tara's Halls" (page 479). The Celtic feeling for nature lives again in these poems. 2. **Saint Fillan's spring,** supposed to be endowed with miraculous curative powers by the medieval Scottish saint whose name it bears. 10. **Caledon,** Scotland.

O wake once more! how rude soe'er the hand
That ventures o'er thy magic maze to stray;
O wake once more! though scarce my skill command
Some feeble echoing of thine earlier year;
Though harsh and faint, and soon to die away,
And all unworthy of thy nobler strain,
Yet if one heart throb higher at its sway,
The wizard note has not been touched in vain.
Then silent be no more! Enchantress, wake again! (1810)

HARP OF THE NORTH, FAREWELL!

From THE LADY OF THE LAKE

Harp of the North, farewell! The hills grow dark,
On purple peaks a deeper shade descending;
In twilight copse the glowworm lights her spark,
The deer, half-seen, are to the covert wending.
Resume thy wizard elm! the fountain lending,
And the wild breeze, thy wilder minstrelsy;
Thy numbers sweet with Nature's vespers blending,
With distant echo from the fold and lea,
And herd-boy's evening pipe, and hum of housing bee.

Yet, once again, farewell, thou Minstrel Harp!
Yet, once again, forgive my feeble sway,
And little reck I of the censure sharp
May idly cavil at an idle lay.
Much have I owed thy strains on life's long way,
Through secret woes the world has never known,
When on the weary night dawned wearier day,
And bitterer was the grief devoured alone.
That I o'erlive such woes, Enchantress! is thine own.

Hark! as my lingering footsteps slow retire,
Some spirit of the air has waked thy string!
'Tis now a seraph bold, with touch of fire,
'Tis now the brush of fairy's frolic wing.
Receding now, the dying numbers ring
Fainter and fainter down the rugged dell,
And now the mountain breezes scarcely bring
A wandering witch-note of the distant spell—
And now, 'tis silent all!—Enchantress, fare thee well! (1810)

Harp of the North, Farewell! This is the closing lyric of *The Lady of the Lake.*

SOLDIER, REST! THY WARFARE O'ER

From THE LADY OF THE LAKE (Canto I)

Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking;
Dream of battled fields no more,
Days of danger, nights of waking.
In our isle's enchanted hall
Hands unseen thy couch are strewing;
Fairy strains of music fall,
Every sense in slumber dewing.
Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Dream of fighting fields no more;
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking,
Morn of toil, nor night of waking.

No rude sound shall reach thine ear,
Armor's clang, or war-steed champing;
Trump nor pibroch summon here
Mustering clan, or squadron tramping.
Yet the lark's shrill fife may come

Soldier, Rest! Thy Warfare O'er. 15. **Trump nor pibroch.** The trumpet summoned lowland Scottish squadrons, the pibroch (the call of the bagpipe), the highland clans.

At the daybreak from the fallow,
And the bittern sound his drum,
Booming from the sedgy shallow. 20
Ruder sounds shall none be near,
Guards nor warders challenge here;
Here's no war-steed's neigh and champing,
Shouting clans or squadrons stamping.

Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done; 25
While our slumbrous spells assail ye
Dream not, with the rising sun,
Bugles here shall sound reveille.
Sleep! the deer is in his den;
Sleep! thy hounds are by thee lying;
Sleep! nor dream in yonder glen 31
How thy gallant steed lay dying.
Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done;
Think not of the rising sun,
For, at dawning to assail ye,
Here no bugles sound reveille. (1810)

BRIGNALL BANKS

From ROKEBY

Oh, Brignall banks are wild and fair,
And Greta woods are green,
And you may gather garlands there,
Would grace a summer queen.
And as I rode by Dalton Hall, 5
Beneath the turrets high,
A maiden on the castle wall
Was singing merrily:

"Oh, Brignall banks are fresh and fair,
And Greta woods are green! 10
I'd rather rove with Edmund there
Than reign our English queen."

"If, maiden, thou wouldst wend with me
To leave both tower and town,
Thou first must guess what life lead we,
That dwell by dale and down; 16
And if thou canst that riddle read,
As read full well you may,
Then to the greenwood shalt thou speed
As blithe as Queen of May." 20

Yet sung she, "Brignall banks are fair,
And Greta woods are green!
I'd rather rove with Edmund there
Than reign our English queen.

"I read you by your bugle horn 25
And by your palfrey good,
I read you for a Ranger sworn
To keep the King's greenwood."
"A Ranger, Lady, winds his horn,
And 'tis at peep of light; 30
His blast is heard at merry morn,
And mine at dead of night."

Yet sung she, "Brignall banks are fair,
And Greta woods are gay!
I would I were with Edmund there, 35
To reign his Queen of May!

"With burnished brand and musketoon
So gallantly you come,
I read you for a bold dragoon,
That lists the tuck of drum." 40
"I list no more the tuck of drum,
No more the trumpet hear;
But when the beetle sounds his hum,
My comrades take the spear.

"And O! though Brignall banks be fair,
And Greta woods be gay, 46
Yet mickle must the maiden dare,
Would reign my Queen of May!

"Maiden! a nameless life I lead,
A nameless death I'll die; 50
The fiend whose lantern lights the mead
Were better mate than I!
And when I'm with my comrades met
Beneath the greenwood bough,
What once we were we all forget, 55
Nor think what we are now."

Chorus. Yet Brignall banks are fresh and fair,
And Greta woods are green,
And you may gather flowers there
Would grace a summer queen.
(1813)

BORDER SONG

From THE MONASTERY

March, march, Ettrick and Teviotdale,
Why the deil dinna ye march forward in order?
March, march, Eskdale and Liddesdale;

47. **mickle**, much.
Border Song. The proper names here mentioned are those of border clans or tribes in Scotland.

All the Blue Bonnets are bound for the Border.
Many a banner spread, 5
Flutters above your head,
Many a crest that is famous in story.
Mount and make ready then,
Sons of the mountain glen,
Fight for the Queen and the old Scottish glory. 10

Come from the hills where the hirsels are grazing,
Come from the glen of the buck and the roe;
Come to the crag where the beacon is blazing,
Come with the buckler, the lance, and the bow.
Trumpets are sounding, 15
War-steeds are bounding,
Stand to your arms, then, and march in good order;
England shall many a day
Tell of the bloody fray,
When the Blue Bonnets came over the Border. (1820)

GLEE FOR KING CHARLES

From WOODSTOCK

Bring the bowl which you boast,
Fill it up to the brim;
'Tis to him we love most,
And to all who love him.
Brave gallants, stand up, 5
And avaunt ye, base carles!
Were there death in the cup,
Here's a health to King Charles!

Though he wanders through dangers,
Unaided, unknown, 10
Dependent on strangers,
Estranged from his own;
Though 'tis under our breath
Amidst forfeits and perils,
Here's to honor and faith, 15
And a health to King Charles!

Let such honors abound,
As the time can afford,
The knee on the ground,
And the hand on the sword; 20
But the time shall come round
When, 'mid lords, dukes, and earls,
The loud trumpet shall sound,
Here's a health to King Charles!
(1826)

10. **Queen**, Mary Stuart. 11. **hirsels**, cattle.

THOMAS CAMPBELL (1777-1844)

YE MARINERS OF ENGLAND

Ye Mariners of England
That guard our native seas!
Whose flag has braved a thousand years
The battle and the breeze!
Your glorious standard launch again 5
To match another foe;
And sweep through the deep,
While the stormy winds do blow!
While the battle rages loud and long
And the stormy winds do blow. 10

The spirits of your fathers
Shall start from every wave—
For the deck it was their field of fame,
And Ocean was their grave.
Where Blake and mighty Nelson fell 15
Your manly hearts shall glow,
As ye sweep through the deep,
While the stormy winds do blow!
While the battle rages loud and long
And the stormy winds do blow. 20

Britannia needs no bulwarks,
No towers along the steep;
Her march is o'er the mountain-waves,
Her home is on the deep.
With thunders from her native oak 25
She quells the floods below,
As they roar on the shore,
When the stormy winds do blow!
When the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy winds do blow. 30

The meteor flag of England
Shall yet terrific burn,
Till danger's troubled night depart
And the star of peace return.
Then, then, ye ocean-warriors! 35
Our song and feast shall flow
To the fame of your name,
When the storm has ceased to blow!
When the fiery fight is heard no more,
And the storm has ceased to blow.
(1801)

THOMAS HOOD (1799-1845)

FAIR INES

O saw ye not fair Ines?
  She's gone into the West,
To dazzle when the sun is down,
  And rob the world of rest.
She took our daylight with her, 5
  The smiles that we love best,
With morning blushes on her cheek,
  And pearls upon her breast.

O turn again, fair Ines,
  Before the fall of night, 10
For fear the moon should shine alone,
  And stars unrivaled bright;
And blessed will the lover be
  That walks beneath their light,
And breathes the love against thy cheek
  I dare not even write! 16

Would I had been, fair Ines,
  That gallant cavalier,
Who rode so gayly by thy side,
  And whispered thee so near! 20
Were there no bonny dames at home,
  Or no true lovers here,
That he should cross the seas to win
  The dearest of the dear?

I saw thee, lovely Ines, 25
  Descend along the shore,
With bands of noble gentlemen,
  And banners waved before;
And gentle youth and maidens gay,
  And snowy plumes they wore. 30
It would have been a beauteous dream—
  If it had been no more!

Alas, alas! fair Ines,
  She went away with song,
With Music waiting on her steps, 35
  And shoutings of the throng;
But some were sad, and felt no mirth,
  But only Music's wrong,
In sounds that sang farewell, farewell,
  To her you've loved so long. 40

Farewell, farewell, fair Ines!
  That vessel never bore
So fair a lady on its deck,
  Nor danced so light before—
Alas for pleasure on the sea, 45
  And sorrow on the shore!
The smile that blessed one lover's heart
  Has broken many more! (1827)

I REMEMBER, I REMEMBER

I remember, I remember
The house where I was born,
The little window where the sun
Came peeping in at morn;
He never came a wink too soon, 5
Nor brought too long a day,
But now, I often wish the night
Had borne my breath away!

I remember, I remember
The roses, red and white, 10
The violets, and the lily-cups,
Those flowers made of light!
The lilacs where the robin built,
And where my brother set
The laburnum on his birthday— 15
The tree is living yet!

I remember, I remember
Where I was used to swing,
And thought the air must rush as fresh
To swallows on the wing; 20
My spirit flew in feathers then,
That is so heavy now,
And summer pools could hardly cool
The fever on my brow!

I remember, I remember 25
The fir trees dark and high;
I used to think their slender tops
Were close against the sky.
It was a childish ignorance,
But now 'tis little joy 30
To know I'm farther off from heaven
Than when I was a boy. (1826)

THE SONG OF THE SHIRT

With fingers weary and worn,
  With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat in unwomanly rags,
  Plying her needle and thread—
Stitch! stitch! stitch! 5
  In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch
  She sang the "Song of the Shirt!"

The Song of the Shirt. The lament of the factory worker here takes its place beside laments for the fallen in battle and for the lost beloved. Labor and social conditions are an acknowledged theme of poetry in the nineteenth century. Cf. "Resolution and Independence" (page 457), "I Hear America Singing" (page 658), and "Chicago" (page 708).

"Work! work! work!
While the cock is crowing aloof! 10
And work—work—work,
Till the stars shine through the roof!
It's, oh! to be a slave
Along with the barbarous Turk,
Where woman has never a soul to save,
If this is Christian work! 16

"Work—work—work
Till the brain begins to swim;
Work—work—work
Till the eyes are heavy and dim! 20
Seam, and gusset, and band,
Band, and gusset, and seam,
Till over the buttons I fall asleep,
And sew them on in a dream!

"O men, with sisters dear! 25
O men, with mothers and wives!
It is not linen you're wearing out,
But human creatures' lives!
Stitch—stitch—stitch,
In poverty, hunger, and dirt, 30
Sewing at once, with a double thread,
A shroud as well as a shirt.

"But why do I talk of Death?
That phantom of grisly bone,
I hardly fear his terrible shape, 35
It seems so like my own—
It seems so like my own,
Because of the fasts I keep;
Oh, God! that bread should be so dear,
And flesh and blood so cheap! 40

"Work—work—work!
My labor never flags;
And what are its wages? A bed of straw,
A crust of bread—and rags.
That shattered roof—and this naked floor— 45
A table—a broken chair—
And a wall so blank, my shadow I thank
For sometimes falling there!

"Work—work—work!
From weary chime to chime, 50
Work—work—work—
As prisoners work for crime!
Band, and gusset, and seam,
Seam, and gusset, and band,
Till the heart is sick, and the brain benumbed, 55
As well as the weary hand.

"Work—work—work,
In the dull December light,
And work—work—work,
When the weather is warm and bright—
While underneath the eaves 61
The brooding swallows cling
As if to show me their sunny backs
And twit me with the spring.

"Oh! but to breathe the breath 65
Of the cowslip and primrose sweet—
With the sky above my head,
And the grass beneath my feet,
For only one short hour
To feel as I used to feel, 70
Before I knew the woes of want
And the walk that costs a meal!

"Oh! but for one short hour!
A respite however brief!
No blessed leisure for love or hope 75
But only time for grief!
A little weeping would ease my heart,
But in their briny bed
My tears must stop, for every drop
Hinders needle and thread!" 80

With fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat in unwomanly rags,
Plying her needle and thread—
Stitch! stitch! stitch! 85
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch—
Would that its tone could reach the Rich!—
She sang this "Song of the Shirt!"

(1843)

THE BRIDGE OF SIGHS

One more unfortunate,
Weary of breath,
Rashly importunate,
Gone to her death!

Take her up tenderly, 5
Lift her with care;

The Bridge of Sighs. Another poem of social criticism. The title alludes to the bridge in Venice over which political prisoners were led either to prison or to execution.

Fashioned so slenderly,
Young, and so fair!

Look at her garments
Clinging like cerements; 10
Whilst the wave constantly
Drips from her clothing;
Take her up instantly,
Loving, not loathing.—

Touch her not scornfully; 15
Think of her mournfully,
Gently and humanly;
Not of the stains of her—
All that remains of her
Now is pure womanly. 20

Make no deep scrutiny
Into her mutiny
Rash and undutiful.
Past all dishonor,
Death has left on her 25
Only the beautiful.

Still, for all slips of hers,
One of Eve's family—
Wipe those poor lips of hers
Oozing so clammily. 30

Loop up her tresses
Escaped from the comb,
Her fair auburn tresses;
Whilst wonderment guesses
Where was her home? 35

Who was her father?
Who was her mother?
Had she a sister?
Had she a brother?
Or was there a dearer one 40
Still, and a nearer one
Yet, than all other?

Alas! for the rarity
Of Christian charity
Under the sun! 45
Oh! it was pitiful!
Near a whole city full,
Home she had none.

Sisterly, brotherly,
Fatherly, motherly 50
Feelings had changed.
Love, by harsh evidence,
Thrown from its eminence;
Even God's providence
Seeming estranged. 55

Where the lamps quiver
So far in the river,
With many a light
From window and casement,
From garret to basement, 60
She stood, with amazement,
Houseless by night.

The bleak wind of March
Made her tremble and shiver;
But not the dark arch, 65
Or the black flowing river.
Mad from life's history,
Glad to death's mystery,
Swift to be hurled—
Anywhere, anywhere 70
Out of the world!

In she plunged boldly,
No matter how coldly
The rough river ran—
Over the brink of it, 75
Picture it—think of it,
Dissolute man!
Lave in it, drink of it,
Then, if you can!

Take her up tenderly, 80
Lift her with care;
Fashioned so slenderly,
Young, and so fair!

Ere her limbs frigidly
Stiffen too rigidly, 85
Decently—kindly—
Smooth, and compose them;
And her eyes, close them,
Staring so blindly!

Dreadfully staring 90
Through muddy impurity,
As when with the daring
Last look of despairing
Fixed on futurity.

Perishing gloomily, 95
Spurred by contumely,
Cold inhumanity,
Burning insanity,
Into her rest.—

Cross her hands humbly, 100
As if praying dumbly,
Over her breast!

Owning her weakness,
Her evil behavior,
And leaving, with meekness, 105
Her sins to her Savior!

(1844)

THOMAS MOORE (1779-1852)

THE HARP THAT ONCE THROUGH TARA'S HALLS

The harp that once through Tara's halls
The soul of music shed,
Now hangs as mute on Tara's walls,
As if that soul were fled.—
So sleeps the pride of former days, 5
So glory's thrill is o'er,
And hearts, that once beat high for praise,
Now feel that pulse no more.

No more to chiefs and ladies bright
The harp of Tara swells; 10
The chord alone, that breaks at night,
Its tale of ruin tells.
Thus Freedom now so seldom wakes,
The only throb she gives,
Is when some heart indignant breaks,
To show that still she lives.

(c. 1808)

BELIEVE ME, IF ALL THOSE ENDEARING YOUNG CHARMS

Believe me, if all those endearing young charms,
Which I gaze on so fondly today,
Were to change by tomorrow, and fleet in my arms,
Like fairy-gifts fading away,
Thou wouldst still be adored, as this moment thou art, 5
Let thy loveliness fade as it will,
And around the dear ruin each wish of my heart
Would entwine itself verdantly still.

It is not while beauty and youth are thine own,
And thy cheeks unprofaned by a tear,
That the fervor and faith of a soul can be known, 11
To which time will but make thee more dear;
No, the heart that has truly loved never forgets,
But as truly loves on to the close,
As the sunflower turns on her god, when he sets, 15
The same look which she turned when he rose.

(c. 1808)

The Harp That Once Through Tara's Hall. Tara was the ancient center of Druidism in County Meath, Ireland, and upon its hill the Irish kings were crowned.

CHARLES WOLFE (1791-1823)

THE BURIAL OF SIR JOHN MOORE AT CORUNNA

Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
As his corse to the rampart we hurried;
Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot
O'er the grave where our hero we buried.

We buried him darkly at dead of night, 5
The sods with our bayonets turning,
By the struggling moonbeam's misty light,
And the lantern dimly burning.

No useless coffin inclosed his breast,
Not in sheet nor in shroud we wound him, 10
But he lay like a warrior taking his rest
With his martial cloak around him.

Few and short were the prayers we said,
And we spoke not a word of sorrow;

The Burial of Sir John Moore. Sir John Moore commanded the English forces in Spain which were sent against Napoleon. He was killed, in 1809, at the battle of Corunna. These events form the basis of Arthur Quiller-Couch's "The Roll-Call of the Reef" (page II-662). Cf. the death of Beowulf in *Beowulf* (page 47), and the death of Sir Richard Grenville in "The Last Fight of the *Revenge*" (page II-290).

But we steadfastly gazed on the face
that was dead, 15
And we bitterly thought of the morrow.

We thought as we hollowed his narrow bed,
And smoothed down his lonely pillow,
That the foe and the stranger would tread o'er his head,
And we far away on the billow! 20

Lightly they'll talk of the spirit that's gone,
And o'er his cold ashes upbraid him—
But little he'll reck, if they let him sleep on
In the grave where a Briton has laid him.

But half of our weary task was done 25
When the clock struck the hour for retiring;
And we heard the distant and random gun
That the foe was sullenly firing.

Slowly and sadly we laid him down,
From the field of his fame fresh and gory; 30
We carved not a line, and we raised not a stone—
But we left him alone with his glory. (1817)

LEIGH HUNT (1784-1859)

JENNY KISSED ME

Jenny kissed me when we met,
Jumping from the chair she sat in;
Time, you thief, who love to get
Sweets into your list, put that in!
Say I'm weary, say I'm sad, 5
Say that health and wealth have missed me,
Say I'm growing old, but add—
Jenny kissed me.
(1838)

Jenny Kissed Me. Jenny was his cousin, Jane Welsh, who married Thomas Carlyle.

*WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR (1775-1864)

ROSE AYLMER

Ah, what avails the sceptered race!
Ah, what the form divine!
What every virtue, every grace!
Rose Aylmer, all were thine.

Rose Aylmer, whom these wakeful eyes
May weep, but never see, 6
A night of memories and of sighs
I consecrate to thee. (1806)

WHEN HELEN FIRST SAW WRINKLES IN HER FACE

FROM LYRICS TO IANTHE

When Helen first saw wrinkles in her face
('Twas when some fifty long had settled there
And intermarried and branched off awide),
She threw herself upon her couch and wept.
On this side hung her head, and over that 5
Listlessly she let fall the faithless brass
That made the men as faithless.
But when you
Found them, or fancied them, and would not hear
That they were only vestiges of smiles,
Or the impression of some amorous hair
Astray from cloistered curls and roseate band, 11
Which had been lying there all night perhaps
Upon a skin so soft, "No, no," you said,
"Sure, they are coming, yes, are come, are here—
Well, and what matters it, while thou art, too!" (1831)

*Walter Savage Landor represents a very curious mixture of classical and romantic influences. He knew and admired the poets of the Romantic Movement, and in his old age he idealized Browning, yet he wrote many poems in most felicitous imitation of the classics. In the lyrics here given he mingles classical mythology with romantic imagination.

Rose Aylmer. Rose Aylmer was a lovely Welsh girl of noble descent, whom Landor had known in Italy. She died there, and Landor commemorated her death by this poem.

When Helen First Saw Wrinkles. Cf. "Menelaus and Helen" (page 620). 6. **faithless brass.** Greek mirrors had polished bronze surfaces instead of glass.

PAST RUINED ILION HELEN LIVES

From LYRICS TO IANTHE

Past ruined Ilion Helen lives,
  Alcestis rises from the shades;
Verse calls them forth; 'tis verse that gives
  Immortal youth to mortal maids.

Soon shall Oblivion's deepening veil 5
  Hide all the peopled hills you see,
The gay, the proud, while lovers hail
  These many summers you and me.
(1831)

WHY, WHY REPINE

From LYRICS TO IANTHE

Why, why repine, my pensive friend,
  At pleasures slipped away?
Some the stern Fates will never lend,
  And all refuse to stay.

I see the rainbow in the sky, 5
  The dew upon the grass—
I see them, and I ask not why
  They glimmer or they pass.

With folded arms I linger not
  To call them back; 'twere vain; 10
In this, or in some other spot,
  I know they'll shine again.
(1846)

MOTHER, I CANNOT MIND MY WHEEL

Mother, I cannot mind my wheel;
  My fingers ache, my lips are dry.
Oh, if you felt the pain I feel!
  But, oh, who ever felt as I?
No longer could I doubt him true— 5
  All other men may use deceit;
He always said my eyes were blue,
  And often swore my lips were sweet.
(1846)

Past Ruined Ilion Helen Lives. Cf. "Ubi Sunt Qui Ante Nos Fuerunt?" (page 344), and "To the Virgins" (page 384).

Why, Why Repine. For another view, see "I Play for Seasons, Not Eternities" (page 575).

ON HIS SEVENTY-FIFTH BIRTHDAY

I strove with none, for none was worth my strife;
  Nature I loved, and next to Nature, Art;
I warmed both hands before the fire of life;
  It sinks, and I am ready to depart.
(1853)

ON DEATH

Death stands above me, whispering low
  I know not what into my ear;
Of his strange language all I know
  Is, there is not a word of fear. (1853)

*GEORGE NOEL GORDON, LORD BYRON (1788-1824)

SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY

From HEBREW MELODIES

She walks in beauty, like the night
  Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
  Meet in her aspect and her eyes;
Thus mellowed to that tender light 5
  Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
  Had half impaired the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
  Or softly lightens o'er her face; 10
Where thoughts serenely sweet express
  How pure, how dear, their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
  So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,

On His Seventy-fifth Birthday. Cf. "Epilogue to Asolando" (page 569), and "On Growing Old" (page 624). The first line is a contradiction of fact, as Landor spent much of his time in quarreling with friends and neighbors.

On Death. Cf. *Sonnets from the Portuguese,* I (page 518), and "Prospice" (page 566), "The Ways of Death Are Soothing and Serene" (page 599), "Dominus Illuminatio Mea" (page 590), and "In After Days" (page 590).

*For Byron, romance was largely autobiographical. He wrote about himself and his experiences under many disguises.

She Walks in Beauty. Cf. "She Was a Phantom of Delight" (page 461) and "The Indian Serenade" (page 502).

But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

(1815)

WHEN WE TWO PARTED

When we two parted
In silence and tears,
Half broken-hearted
To sever for years,
Pale grew thy cheek and cold, 5
Colder thy kiss;
Truly that hour foretold
Sorrow to this.

The dew of the morning
Sunk chill on my brow— 10
It felt like the warning
Of what I feel now.
Thy vows are all broken,
And light is thy fame;
I hear thy name spoken, 15
And share in its shame.

They name thee before me,
A knell to mine ear;
A shudder comes o'er me—
Why wert thou so dear? 20
They know not I knew thee,
Who knew thee too well;
Long, long shall I rue thee,
Too deeply to tell.

In secret we met— 25
In silence I grieve,
That thy heart could forget,
Thy spirit deceive.
If I should meet thee
After long years, 30
How should I greet thee?—
With silence and tears.

(1816)

STANZAS FOR MUSIC

There be none of Beauty's daughters
With a magic like thee;
And like music on the waters
Is thy sweet voice to me;
When, as if its sound were causing 5
The charméd ocean's pausing,
The waves lie still and gleaming,
And the lulled winds seem dreaming;

And the midnight moon is weaving
Her bright chain o'er the deep; 10
Whose breast is gently heaving,
As an infant's asleep.
So the spirit bows before thee,
To listen and adore thee;
With a full but soft emotion, 15
Like the swell of summer's ocean.

(1816)

SONNET ON CHILLON

Eternal Spirit of the chainless Mind!
Brightest in dungeons, Liberty! thou art,
For there thy habitation is the heart—
The heart which love of thee alone can bind;
And when thy sons to fetters are consigned— 5
To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless gloom,
Their country conquers with their martyrdom,
And Freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.
Chillon! thy prison is a holy place,
And thy sad floor an altar—for 'twas trod, 10
Until his very steps have left a trace
Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,
By Bonnivard! May none those marks efface!
For they appeal from tyranny to God.

(1816)

WE'LL GO NO MORE A-ROVING

So, we'll go no more a-roving
So late into the night,
Though the heart be still as loving,
And the moon be still as bright.

When We Two Parted. Cf. "Ae Fond Kiss" (page 444).

Sonnet on Chillon. Cf. "Thought of a Briton on the Subjugation of Switzerland" (page 469). François Bonnivard (1493-1570) was a Swiss clergyman who refused to acknowledge the sovereignity of his temporal lord, the Duke of Gex, and was therefore kept as a political prisoner for four years in the castle of Chillon.

We'll Go No More a-Roving. Cf. Henley's poem by the same title (page 600), and "The Chestnut Casts His Flambeaux" (page 619).

For the sword outwears its sheath, 5
And the soul wears out the breast,
And the heart must pause to breathe,
And love itself have rest.

Though the night was made for loving,
And the day returns too soon, 10
Yet we'll go no more a-roving
By the light of the moon. (1817)

THE ISLES OF GREECE

The isles of Greece! the isles of Greece
Where burning Sappho loved and sung,
Where grew the arts of war and peace,
Where Delos rose, and Phoebus sprung!
Eternal summer gilds them yet, 5
But all, except their sun, is set.

The Scian and the Teian muse,
The hero's harp, the lover's lute,
Have found the fame your shores refuse;
Their place of birth alone is mute 10
To sounds which echo further west
Than your sires' "Islands of the Blest."

The mountains look on Marathon—
And Marathon looks on the sea;
And musing there an hour alone, 15
I dreamed that Greece might still be free;
For standing on the Persians' grave,
I could not deem myself a slave.

A king sate on the rocky brow
Which looks o'er sea-born Salamis; 20
And ships, by thousands, lay below,
And men in nations—all were his!
He counted them at break of day—
And when the sun set, where were they?

And where are they? and where art thou, 25
My country? On thy voiceless shore
The heroic lay is tuneless now—
The heroic bosom beats no more!
And must thy lyre, so long divine,
Degenerate into hands like mine? 30

'Tis something in the dearth of fame,
Though linked among a fettered race,
To feel at least a patriot's shame,
Even as I sing, suffuse my face;
For what is left the poet here? 35
For Greeks a blush—for Greece a tear.

Must *we* but weep o'er days more blest?
Must *we* but blush?—Our fathers bled.
Earth! render back from out thy breast
A remnant of our Spartan dead! 40
Of the three hundred grant but three,
To make a new Thermopylae!

What, silent still? and silent all?
Ah! no—the voices of the dead
Sound like a distant torrent's fall, 45
And answer, "Let one living head,
But one, arise—we come, we come!"
'Tis but the living who are dumb.

In vain—in vain; strike other chords;
Fill high the cup with Samian wine! 50
Leave battles to the Turkish hordes,
And shed the blood of Scio's vine!
Hark! rising to the ignoble call—
How answers each bold Bacchanal!

You have the Pyrrhic dance as yet; 55
Where is the Pyrrhic phalanx gone?
Of two such lessons, why forget
The nobler and the manlier one?
You have the letters Cadmus gave—
Think ye he meant them for a slave? 60

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
We will not think of themes like these!
It made Anacreon's song divine.

The Isles of Greece. From *Don Juan*, Canto III. Cf. Final Chorus from Hellas" (page 503) and "Of Old Sat Freedom on the Heights" (page 529). Byron died in Greece, while aiding the Greeks to regain their freedom. 2. **Sappho** (sixth century B.C.), a Greek poetess. 4. **Delos . . . . Phoebus.** Apollo was fabled to have been born on the Island of Delos. 7. **Scian and the Teian Muse,** Homer of Chios (Scios) and Anacreon of Teos—both famous Greek poets. Homer is legendary, Anacreon real. 12. **Islands of the Blest,** the abode of the happy dead. 13, 20, 42. **Marathon, Salamis, Thermopylae,** battles in the Persian War (490-480 B.C.). 19. **A king.** Xerxes of Persia saw his fleet defeated at Salamis.

40. **our Spartan dead.** Three hundred Spartans defended a pass against the entire Persian army, and died fighting. 54. **Bacchanal,** reveler of Bacchus. 55-56. **Pyrrhic dance, Pyrrhic phalanx,** an ancient Greek war dance and a military formation. 59. **Cadmus,** in Greek legend, the first user of writing. 63-64. **Anacreon . . . . Polycrates.** Anacreon was a Greek lyric poet (sixth century B.C.), who finally settled at the court of Polycrates, tyrant of Samos.

He served—but served Polycrates—
A tyrant; but our masters then 65
Were still, at least, our countrymen.

The tyrant of the Chersonese
Was freedom's best and bravest friend;
That tyrant was Miltiades!
O that the present hour would lend 70
Another despot of the kind!
Such chains as his were sure to bind.

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
On Suli's rock, and Parga's shore,
Exists the remnant of a line 75
Such as the Doric mothers bore;
And there, perhaps, some seed is sown,
The Heracleidan blood might own.

Trust not for freedom to the Franks—
They have a king who buys and sells; 80
In native swords and native ranks
The only hope of courage dwells.
But Turkish force and Latin fraud
Would break your shield, however broad.

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine! 85
Our virgins dance beneath the shade—
I see their glorious black eyes shine;
But gazing on each glowing maid,
My own the burning teardrop laves,
To think such breasts must suckle slaves. 90

Place me on Sunium's marbled steep,
Where nothing, save the waves and I,
May hear our mutual murmurs sweep;
There, swan-like, let me sing and die.
A land of slaves shall ne'er be mine— 95
Dash down yon cup of Samian wine!

(1821)

69. **Miltiades**, an Athenian general of the Persian War, who also was tyrant of the Chersonese in southern Greece. 74. **Suli's rock, and Parga's shore**, Albanian localities connected with the Greek War of Independence (1820-1830). 76. **Doric Mothers**. The heroism of the Spartans (Dorians) is proverbial. 78. **Heracleidan blood**, pertaining to the descendants of Hercules. 79-80. **Franks . . . . king**, alluding to the then calculating attitude of the French and their king, Louis XVIII (reigned 1815-1824). 91. **Sunium**, a promontory in Attica upon whose crest stood a marble temple to Poseidon, god of the sea.

*PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY
(1792-1822)

STANZAS

Away! the moor is dark beneath the moon,
Rapid clouds have drunk the last pale beam of even:
Away! the gathering winds will call the darkness soon,
And profoundest midnight shroud the serene lights of heaven.
Pause not! the time is past! Every voice cries "Away!" 5
Tempt not with one last tear thy friend's ungentle mood;
Thy lover's eye, so glazed and cold, dares not entreat thy stay;
Duty and dereliction guide thee back to solitude.

Away, away! to thy sad and silent home;
Pour bitter tears on its desolated hearth; 10
Watch the dim shades as like ghosts they go and come,
And complicate strange webs of melancholy mirth.
The leaves of wasted autumn woods shall float around thine head,
The blooms of dewy spring shall gleam beneath thy feet.
But thy soul or this world must fade in the frost that binds the dead, 15
Ere midnight's frown and morning's smile, ere thou and peace, may meet.

The cloud shadows of midnight possess their own repose,
For the weary winds are silent, or the moon is in the deep;
Some respite to its turbulence unresting ocean knows;

*To characterize Shelley unqualifiedly as the poet of intellectual revolt is not fair. Shelley passionately desired intellectual freedom, and shattered conventions, but his spirit was harmonized and guided by a love of intellectual beauty. Keats saw beauty in nature, and desired to feel it by personal experience; Shelley perceived intellectual beauty, and in many of his poems created a symbolic world for its expression, especially in *Prometheus Unbound*. His intense emotion moves through the realm of nature, and beyond it; he employs similes from nature merely to make clear his meaning.

Stanzas. An early fragment filled with despair. Cf. "Ode to the West Wind" (page 489) for the calmer development of this thought.

Whatever moves or toils or grieves
hath its appointed sleep. 20
Thou in the grave shalt rest—yet, till
the phantoms flee,
Which that house and heath and garden made dear to thee erewhile,
Thy remembrance and repentance and
deep musings are not free
From the music of two voices, and
the light of one sweet smile.

(1816)

HYMN TO INTELLECTUAL BEAUTY

The awful shadow of some unseen Power
Floats though unseen amongst us—visiting
This various world with as inconstant wing
As summer winds that creep from flower to flower—
Like moonbeams that behind some piny mountain shower, 5
It visits with inconstant glance
Each human heart and countenance;
Like hues and harmonies of evening—
Like clouds in starlight widely spread—
Like memory of music fled— 10
Like aught that for its grace may be
Dear, and yet dearer for its mystery.

Spirit of Beauty, that dost consecrate
With thine own hues all thou dost shine upon
Of human thought or form—where art thou gone? 15
Why dost thou pass away and leave our state,
This dim vast vale of tears, vacant and desolate?
Ask why the sunlight not forever
Weaves rainbows o'er yon mountain river,
Why aught should fail and fade that once is shown, 20
Why fear and dream and death and birth
Cast on the daylight of this earth
Such gloom—why man has such a scope
For love and hate, despondency and hope?

No voice from some sublimer world hath ever 25
To sage or poet these responses given—
Therefore the names of Dæmon, Ghost, and Heaven,
Remain the records of their vain endeavor,
Frail spells—whose uttered charm might not avail to sever,
From all we hear and all we see, 30
Doubt, chance, and mutability.
Thy light alone—like mist o'er mountains driven,
Or music by the night wind sent,
Through strings of some still instrument,
Or moonlight on a midnight stream, 35
Gives grace and truth to life's unquiet dream.

Love, Hope, and Self-Esteem, like clouds depart
And come, for some uncertain moments lent,
Man were immortal, and omnipotent,
Didst thou, unknown and awful as thou art, 40
Keep with thy glorious train firm state within his heart.
Thou messenger of sympathies,
That wax and wane in lovers' eyes—
Thou—that to human thought art nourishment,
Like darkness to a dying flame! 45
Depart not as thy shadow came,
Depart not—lest the grave should be,
Like life and fear, a dark reality.

While yet a boy I sought for ghosts, and sped
Through many a listening chamber, cave and ruin, 50
And starlight wood, with fearful steps pursuing

22 ff. Alluding to Shelley's boyhood home and to a sister and girl cousin whom he especially loved.

Hymn to Intellectual Beauty. This poem expresses the poetic creed of Shelley. Contrast it with that of Keats in "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (page 509).

Hopes of high talk with the departed dead.
I called on poisonous names with which our youth is fed;
I was not heard—I saw them not—
When musing deeply on the lot 55
Of life, at the sweet time when winds are wooing
All vital things that wake to bring
News of birds and blossoming—
Sudden, thy shadow fell on me;
I shrieked, and clasped my hands in ecstasy! 60

I vowed that I would dedicate my powers
To thee and thine—have I not kept the vow?
With beating heart and streaming eyes, even now
I call the phantoms of a thousand hours
Each from his voiceless grave; they have in visioned bowers 65
Of studious zeal or love's delight
Outwatched with me the envious night—
They know that never joy illumed my brow
Unlinked with hope that thou wouldst free
This world from its dark slavery, 70
That thou—O awful Loveliness,
Wouldst give whate'er these words cannot express.

The day becomes more solemn and serene
When noon is past—there is a harmony
In autumn, and a luster in its sky, 75
Which through the summer is not heard or seen,
As if it could not be, as if it had not been!
Thus let thy power, which like the truth
Of nature on my passive youth
Descended, to my onward life supply 80
Its calm—to one who worships thee,
And every form containing thee,
Whom, Spirit fair, thy spells did bind
To fear himself, and love all human kind. (1817)

OZYMANDIAS

I met a traveler from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command, 5
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed.
And on the pedestal these words appear:
"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings; 10
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away. (1818)

THE CLOUD

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
From the seas and the streams;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
In their noonday dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken 5
The sweet buds every one,
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
As she dances about the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under, 10
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,
And their great pines groan aghast;

Ozymandias. 8. **fed**, i.e., on them.

And all the night 'tis my pillow white, 15
While I sleep in the arms of the blast.
Sublime on the towers of my skyey bowers,
Lightning my pilot sits;
In a cavern under is fettered the thunder;
It struggles and howls at fits. 20
Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
This pilot is guiding me,
Lured by the love of the genii that move
In the depths of the purple sea;
Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills, 25
Over the lakes and the plains,
Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
The Spirit he loves remains;
And I all the while bask in heaven's blue smile,
Whilst he is dissolving in rains. 30

The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
And his burning plumes outspread,
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
When the morning star shines dead,
As on the jag of a mountain crag, 35
Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
An eagle alit one moment may sit
In the light of its golden wings.
And when sunset may breathe, from the lit sea beneath,
Its ardors of rest and of love, 40
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
From the depth of heaven above,
With wings folded I rest, on mine airy nest,
As still as a brooding dove.

That orbéd maiden, with white fire laden, 45
Whom mortals call the moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only the angels hear, 50
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
The stars peep behind her and peer;
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent, 55
Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the sun's throne with a burning zone,
And the moon's with a girdle of pearl; 60
The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel and swim,
When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
Over a torrent sea,
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof, 65
The mountains its columns be.
The triumphal arch through which I march
With hurricane, fire, and snow,
When the powers of the air are chained to my chair,
Is the million-colored bow; 70
The sphere-fire above its soft colors wove,
While the moist earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of earth and water,
And the nursling of the sky;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores; 75
I change, but I cannot die.
For after the rain when, with never a stain,
The pavilion of heaven is bare,
And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams
Build up the blue dome of air, 80
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
I arise and unbuild it again.

(1820)

33. **rack**, cloud mist

81. **cenotaph**, empty tomb, commemorating one buried elsewhere.

TO A SKY-LARK

Hail to thee, blithe spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art. 5

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest. 10

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are bright'ning,
Thou dost float and run;
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun. 15

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of heaven
In the broad daylight
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight, 20

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere,
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear,
Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there. 25

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is overflowed. 30

What thou art we know not;
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody. 35

Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not; 40

Like a high-born maiden
In a palace tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower; 45

Like a glowworm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its aërial hue
Among the flowers and grass which screen it from the view; 50

Like a rose embowered
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflowered,
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet those heavy-wingéd thieves. 55

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers,
All that ever was
Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass. 60

Teach us, sprite or bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine;
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine: 65

Chorus Hymeneal,
Or triumphal chaunt,
Matched with thine, would be all
But an empty vaunt,
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want. 70

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?
What fields, or waves, or mountains?
What shapes of sky or plain?
What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of pain? 75

66. **Hymeneal**, from Hymen, Greek god of marriage.

With thy clear keen joyance
Languor cannot be—
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee:
Thou lovest—but ne'er knew love's sad satiety. 80

Waking or asleep,
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream,
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream? 85

We look before and after
And pine for what is not;
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought. 90

Yet if we could scorn
Hate, and pride, and fear;
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near. 95

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound—
Better than all treasures
That in books are found—
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground! 100

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow,
The world should listen then—as I am listening now. (1820)

ODE TO THE WEST WIND

I

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,
Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red, 4
Pestilence-stricken multitudes; O thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The wingéd seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill 10
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odors plain and hill—

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and preserver—hear, oh, hear!

II

Thou on whose stream, 'mid the steep sky's commotion, 15
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of heaven and ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning—there are spread
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head 20

Of some fierce Maenad, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulcher, 25
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapors, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst—oh, hear!

21. **Maenad**, a nymph attendant on Bacchus.

III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams, 31

Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers 35
So sweet the sense faints picturing them! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know 40

Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves—oh, hear!

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share 45

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skyey speed 50
Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh! lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

32. **Baiae's bay**, part of the Bay of Naples.

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed 55
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

V

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is;
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone, 60
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse, 65

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind? (1820)

LYRICS FROM PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

Chorus of Spirits

From unremembered ages we
Gentle guides and guardians be
Of heaven-oppressed mortality;
And we breathe, and sicken not,
The atmosphere of human thought, 5
Be it dim, and dank, and gray,
Like a storm-extinguished day,

Lyrics from Prometheus Unbound. The Prometheus legend has long been used as a symbol of revolt. In *Prometheus Bound*, by Aeschylus, Prometheus commences his long punishment; in *Prometheus Unbound*, Shelley pictures his deliverance, the overthrow of the tyrant Zeus, and the return of the golden age of innocence, beauty, and freedom. **1. we**, a group of spirits sent to Prometheus by his Mother Earth to reveal to him the best in Mankind. These spirits come to him after he has been tortured by a Fury, who has shown him the worthlessness of Mankind, for whom he is suffering.

Traveled o'er by dying gleams;
  Be it bright as all between
Cloudless skies and windless streams, 10
  Silent, liquid, and serene;
As the birds within the wind,
  As the fish within the wave,
As the thoughts of man's own mind
  Float through all above the grave; 15
We make there our liquid lair,
Voyaging cloudlike and unpent
Through the boundless element.
Thence we bear the prophecy
Which begins and ends in thee! 20

First Spirit

On a battle-trumpet's blast
I fled hither, fast, fast, fast,
'Mid the darkness upward cast.
From the dust of creeds outworn,
From the tyrant's banner torn, 25
Gathering 'round me, onward borne,
There was mingled many a cry—
Freedom! Hope! Death! Victory!
Till they faded through the sky;
And one sound, above, around, 30
One sound beneath, around, above,
Was moving; 'twas the soul of love;
'Twas the hope, the prophecy,
Which begins and ends in thee.

Second Spirit

A rainbow's arch stood on the sea, 35
Which rocked beneath, immovably;
And the triumphant storm did flee,
Like a conqueror, swift and proud,
Between, with many a captive cloud,
A shapeless, dark, and rapid crowd, 40
Each by lightning riven in half.
I heard the thunder hoarsely laugh;
Mighty fleets were strewn like chaff
And spread beneath a hell of death
O'er the white waters. I alit 45
On a great ship lightning-split,
And speeded hither on the sigh
Of one who gave an enemy
His plank, then plunged aside to die.

Third Spirit

I sat beside a sage's bed, 50
And the lamp was burning red
Near the book where he had fed,
When a Dream with plumes of flame,
To his pillow hovering came,
And I knew it was the same 55
Which had kindled long ago
Pity, eloquence, and woe;
And the world awhile below
Wore the shade its luster made.
It has borne me here as fleet 60
As Desire's lightning feet;
I must ride it back ere morrow,
Or the sage will wake in sorrow.

Fourth Spirit

On a poet's lips I slept
Dreaming like a love-adept 65
In the sound his breathing kept;
Nor seeks nor finds he mortal blisses
But feeds on the aërial kisses
Of shapes that haunt thought's wilder-
  nesses.
He will watch from dawn to gloom 70
The lake-reflected sun illume
The yellow bees in the ivy-bloom,
Nor heed nor see what things they
  be;
But from these create he can
Forms more real than living man, 75
Nurselings of immortality!
One of these awakened me,
And I sped to succor thee.

Fifth Spirit

As over wide dominions
I sped, like some swift cloud that wings
  the wide air's wildernesses, 80
That planet-crested shape swept by
  on lightning-braided pinions,
Scattering the liquid joy of life from
  his ambrosial tresses.
His footsteps paved the world with light;
  but as I passed 'twas fading,
And hollow Ruin yawned behind; great
  sages bound in madness,
And headless patriots, and pale youths
  who perished, unupbraiding, 85
Gleamed in the night. I wandered o'er,
  till thou, O King of sadness,
Turned by thy smile the worst I saw to
  recollected gladness.

Sixth Spirit

Ah, sister! Desolation is a delicate
  thing:
It walks not on the earth, it floats not
  on the air,

But treads with killing footstep, and fans with silent wing 90
The tender hopes which in their hearts the best and gentlest bear;
Who, soothed to false repose by the fanning plumes above
And the music-stirring motion of its soft and busy feet,
Dream visions of aërial joy, and call the monster, Love,
And wake, and find the shadow Pain, as he whom now we greet. 95

Chorus

Though Ruin now Love's shadow be,
Following him, destroyingly,
On death's white and wingéd steed
Which the fleetest cannot flee.
Trampling down both flower and weed, 100
Man and beast, and foul and fair,
Like a tempest through the air;
Thou shalt quell this horseman grim,
Woundless though in heart or limb.
Prometheus. Spirits! how know ye this shall be? 105

Chorus

In the atmosphere we breathe,
As buds grow red when the snow-storms flee,
From spring gathering up beneath,
Whose mild winds shake the elder brake,
And the wandering herdsmen know 110
That the white-thorn soon will blow:
Wisdom, Justice, Love, and Peace,
When they struggle to increase,
Are to us as soft winds be
To shepherd boys, the prophecy 115
Which begins and ends in thee.

(1820)

*II

Voice in the Air Singing

Life of Life! thy lips enkindle
With their love the breath between them,
And thy smiles before they dwindle
Make the cold air fire; then screen them 120
In those looks, where whoso gazes
Faints, entangled in their mazes.

Child of Light! thy limbs are burning
Through the vest which seems to hide them;
As the radiant lines of morning 125
Through the clouds ere they divide them;
And this atmosphere divinest
Shrouds thee whereso'er thou shinest.

Fair are others; none beholds thee,
But thy voice sounds low and tender
Like the fairest, for it folds thee 131
From the sight, that liquid splendor,
And all feel, yet see thee never,
As I feel now, lost for ever!

Lamp of Earth! where'er thou movest
Its dim shapes are clad with brightness, 136
And the souls of whom thou lovest
Walk upon the winds with lightness,
Till they fail, as I am failing,
Dizzy, lost, yet unbewailing! 140

*III

Asia

My soul is an enchanted boat,
Which, like a sleeping swan, doth float
Upon the silver waves of thy sweet singing;
And thine doth like an angel sit
Beside a helm conducting it, 145
Whilst all the winds with melody are ringing.
It seems to float ever, forever,
Upon that many-winding river,
Between mountains, woods, abysses,
A paradise of wildernesses! 150
Till, like one in slumber bound,
Borne to the ocean, I float down, around,
Into a sea profound, of ever-spreading sound.

Meanwhile thy spirit lifts its pinions
In music's most serene dominions; 155
Catching the winds that fan that happy heaven.
And we sail on, away, afar,

*At the moment when Zeus is dethroned, Asia, who represents love and beauty in nature, and who has been cast down by the imprisonment of Prometheus, her beloved, suddenly resumes her original splendor. A Voice in the air sings about her apotheosis, and then Asia chants the hymn of her ecstasy.

124. vest, garment.

Without a course, without a star,
But, by the instinct of sweet music driven;
Till through Elysian garden islets 160
By thee, most beautiful of pilots,
Where never mortal pinnace glided,
The boat of my desire is guided.
Realms where the air we breathe is love,
Which in the winds and on the waves doth move, 165
Harmonizing this earth with what we feel above.

We have passed Age's icy caves,
And Manhood's dark and tossing waves,
And Youth's smooth ocean, smiling to betray.
Beyond the glassy gulfs we flee 170
Of shadow-peopled Infancy,
Through Death and Birth, to a diviner day—
A paradise of vaulted bowers,
Lit by downward-gazing flowers,
And watery paths that wind between
Wildernesses calm and green, 176
Peopled by shapes too bright to see,
And rest, having beheld; somewhat like thee;
Which walk upon the sea, and chant melodiously! (1820)

ADONAIS

I weep for Adonais—he is dead!
Oh, weep for Adonais! though our tears
Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a head!
And thou, sad Hour, selected from all years
To mourn our loss, rouse thy obscure compeers, 5
And teach them thine own sorrow! Say: "With me
Died Adonais; till the Future dares
Forget the Past, his fate and fame shall be
An echo and a light unto eternity."

Where wert thou, mighty Mother, when he lay, 10
When thy son lay, pierced by the shaft which flies
In darkness? Where was lorn Urania
When Adonais died? With veiléd eyes,
'Mid listening Echoes, in her Paradise
She sate, while one, with soft enamored breath, 15
Rekindled all the fading melodies,
With which, like flowers that mock the corse beneath,
He had adorned and hid the coming bulk of death.

Oh, weep for Adonais—he is dead!
Wake, melancholy Mother, wake and weep! 20
Yet wherefore? Quench within their burning bed
Thy fiery tears, and let thy loud heart keep,
Like his, a mute and uncomplaining sleep;
For he is gone, where all things wise and fair
Descend—oh, dream not that the amorous Deep 25
Will yet restore him to the vital air;
Death feeds on his mute voice, and laughs at our despair.

Most musical of mourners, weep again!
Lament anew, Urania!—He died—
Who was the Sire of an immortal strain, 30
Blind, old, and lonely, when his country's pride,
The priest, the slave, and the liberticide,
Trampled and mocked with many a loathéd rite
Of lust and blood; he went, unterrified,
Into the gulf of death; but his clear Sprite 35
Yet reigns o'er earth—the third among the sons of light.

Adonais. An elegy on the death of Keats. In it Shelley laments not merely Keats, but the lack of appreciation of poetry in England. Cf. "Lycidas" (page 395), "In Memoriam" (pages 533-540), and "The Nameless One" (page 513). In these elegies the spirit of the poet is regarded as being eternal.

12. **Urania**, the heavenly Muse. 29. **He**, Milton, whom Shelley considered to be the third greatest poet, Homer and Dante alone surpassing him (see line 36).

Most musical of mourners, weep anew!
Not all to that bright station dared to climb;
And happier they their happiness who knew,
Whose tapers yet burn through that night of time 40
In which suns perished; others more sublime,
Struck by the envious wrath of man or God,
Have sunk, extinct in their refulgent prime;
And some yet live, treading the thorny road,
Which leads, through toil and hate, to Fame's serene abode. 45

But now, thy youngest, dearest one has perished,
The nursling of thy widowhood, who grew,
Like a pale flower by some sad maiden cherished,
And fed with true-love tears, instead of dew;
Most musical of mourners, weep anew! 50
Thy extreme hope, the loveliest and the last,
The bloom, whose petals, nipped before they blew,
Died on the promise of the fruit, is waste;
The broken lily lies—the storm is overpast.

To that high Capital, where kingly Death 55
Keeps his pale court in beauty and decay,
He came; and bought, with price of purest breath,
A grave among the eternal.—Come away!
Haste, while the vault of blue Italian day
Is yet his fitting charnel-roof! while still 60
He lies, as if in dewy sleep he lay;
Awake him not! surely he takes his fill
Of deep and liquid rest, forgetful of all ill.

He will awake no more, oh, never more!—
Within the twilight chamber spreads apace, 65
The shadow of white Death, and at the door
Invisible Corruption waits to trace
His extreme way to her dim dwelling-place;
The eternal Hunger sits, but pity and awe
Soothe her pale rage, nor dares she to deface 70
So fair a prey, till darkness, and the law
Of change, shall o'er his sleep the mortal curtain draw.

Oh, weep for Adonais!—The quick Dreams,
The passion-wingéd Ministers of thought,
Who were his flocks, whom near the living streams 75
Of his young spirit he fed, and whom he taught
The love which was its music, wander not—
Wander no more, from kindling brain to brain,
But droop there, whence they sprung; and mourn their lot
Round the cold heart, where, after their sweet pain, 80
They ne'er will gather strength, or find a home again.

And one with trembling hands clasps his cold head,
And fans him with her moonlight wings, and cries:
"Our love, our hope, our sorrow, is not dead;
See, on the silken fringe of his faint eyes, 85
Like dew upon a sleeping flower, there lies
A tear some Dream has loosened from his brain."
Lost Angel of a ruined Paradise!
She knew not 'twas her own; as with no stain
She faded, like a cloud which had outwept its rain. 90

55. **Capital**, Rome, where Keats died.

One from a lucid urn of starry dew
Washed his light limbs as if embalming them;
Another clipped her profuse locks, and threw
The wreath upon him, like an anadem,
Which frozen tears instead of pearls begem; 95
Another in her willful grief would break
Her bow and wingéd reeds, as if to stem
A greater loss with one which was more weak;
And dull the barbéd fire against his frozen cheek.

Another Splendor on his mouth alit, 100
That mouth, whence it was wont to draw the breath
Which gave it strength to pierce the guarded wit,
And pass into the panting heart beneath
With lightning and with music; the damp death
Quenched its caress upon his icy lips; 105
And, as a dying meteor stains a wreath
Of moonlight vapor, which the cold night clips,
It flushed through his pale limbs, and passed to its eclipse.

And others came—Desires and Adorations,
Wingéd Persuasions and veiled Destinies, 110
Splendors, and Glooms, and glimmering Incarnations
Of hopes and fears, and twilight Phantasies;
And Sorrow, with her family of Sighs,
And Pleasure, blind with tears, led by the gleam
Of her own dying smile instead of eyes, 115
Came in slow pomp—the moving pomp might seem
Like pageantry of mist on an autumnal stream.

All he had loved, and molded into thought,
From shape, and hue, and odor, and sweet sound,
Lamented Adonais. Morning sought
Her eastern watchtower, and her hair unbound, 121
Wet with the tears which should adorn the ground,
Dimmed the aërial eyes that kindle day;
Afar the melancholy thunder moaned,
Pale Ocean in unquiet slumber lay, 125
And the wild winds flew round, sobbing in their dismay.

Lost Echo sits amid the voiceless mountains,
And feeds her grief with his remembered lay,
And will no more reply to winds or fountains,
Or amorous birds perched on the young green spray, 130
Or herdsman's horn, or bell at closing day;
Since she can mimic not his lips, more dear
Than those for whose disdain she pined away
Into a shadow of all sounds—a drear
Murmur, between their songs, is all the woodmen hear. 135

Grief made the young Spring wild, and she threw down
Her kindling buds, as if she Autumn were,
Or they dead leaves; since her delight is flown,
For whom should she have waked the sullen year?
To Phoebus was not Hyacinth so dear 140
Nor to himself Narcissus, as to both
Thou, Adonais. Wan they stand and sear
Amid the faint companions of their youth,
With dew all turned to tears; odor, to sighing ruth.

140. Phoebus . . . . Hyacinth. Hyacinthus was a beloved companion of Apollo whom the god accidentally killed. **141. Narcissus,** a handsome Greek youth who fell in love with his own reflection in a pool of water.

Thy spirit's sister, the lorn nightingale, 145
Mourns not her mate with such melodious pain;
Not so the eagle, who like thee could scale
Heaven, and could nourish in the sun's domain
Her mighty youth with morning, doth complain,
Soaring and screaming round her empty nest, 150
As Albion wails for thee. The curse of Cain
Light on his head who pierced thy innocent breast,
And scared the angel soul that was its earthly guest!

Ah, woe is me! Winter is come and gone,
But grief returns with the revolving year; 155
The airs and streams renew their joyous tone;
The ants, the bees, the swallows reappear;
Fresh leaves and flowers deck the dead Seasons' bier;
The amorous birds now pair in every brake,
And build their mossy homes in field and brere; 160
And the green lizard, and the golden snake,
Like unimprisoned flames, out of their trance awake.

Through wood and stream and field and hill and ocean
A quickening life from the earth's heart has burst,
As it has ever done, with change and motion 165
From the great morning of the world when first
God dawned on Chaos; in its stream immersed
The lamps of heaven flash with a softer light;
All baser things pant with life's sacred thirst,
Diffuse themselves, and spend in love's delight 170
The beauty and the joy of their renewéd might.

The leprous corpse, touched by this spirit tender
Exhales itself in flowers of gentle breath;
Like incarnations of the stars, when splendor
Is changed to fragrance, they illumine death 175
And mock the merry worm that wakes beneath;
Naught we know, dies. Shall that alone which knows
Be as a sword consumed before the sheath
By sightless lightning?—th' intense atom glows
A moment, then is quenched in a most cold repose. 180

Alas! that all we loved of him should be,
But for our grief, as if it had not been,
And grief itself be mortal! Woe is me!
Whence are we, and why are we? Of what scene
The actors or spectators? Great and mean 185
Meet massed in death, who lends what life must borrow.
As long as skies are blue, and fields are green,
Evening must usher night, night urge the morrow,
Month follow month with woe, and year wake year to sorrow.

He will awake no more, oh, never more! 190
"Wake thou," cried Misery, "childless Mother, rise
Out of thy sleep, and slake, in thy heart's core,
A wound more fierce than his with tears and sighs."
And all the Dreams that watched Urania's eyes,
And all the Echoes whom their sister's song 195

160. brere, brier.

Had held in holy silence, cried: "Arise!"
Swift as a Thought by the snake Memory stung,
From her ambrosial rest the fading Splendor sprung.

She rose like an autumnal Night, that springs
Out of the East, and follows wild and drear
The golden Day, which, on eternal wings,
Even as a ghost abandoning a bier,
Had left the earth a corpse. Sorrow and fear
So struck, so roused, so rapt Urania;
So saddened round her like an atmosphere
Of stormy mist; so swept her on her way
Even to the mournful place where Adonais lay.

Out of her secret Paradise she sped,
Through camps and cities rough with stone, and steel,
And human hearts, which to her aëry tread
Yielding not, wounded the invisible
Palms of her tender feet where'er they fell;
And barbéd tongues, and thoughts more sharp than they,
Rent the soft Form they never could repel,
Whose sacred blood, like the young tears of May,
Paved with eternal flowers that undeserving way.

In the death chamber for a moment Death,
Shamed by the presence of that living Might,
Blushed to annihilation, and the breath
Revisited those lips, and life's pale light
Flashed through those limbs, so late her dear delight.
"Leave me not wild and drear and comfortless,
As silent lightning leaves the starless night!
Leave me not!" cried Urania. Her distress
Roused Death; Death rose and smiled, and met her vain caress.

"Stay yet awhile! speak to me once again;
Kiss me, so long but as a kiss may live;
And in my heartless breast and burning brain
That word, that kiss shall all thoughts else survive,
With food of saddest memory kept alive,
Now thou art dead, as if it were a part
Of thee, my Adonais! I would give
All that I am to be as thou now art!
But I am chained to Time, and cannot thence depart!

"O gentle child, beautiful as thou wert,
Why didst thou leave the trodden paths of men
Too soon, and with weak hands though mighty heart
Dare the unpastured dragon in his den?
Defenseless as thou wert, oh, where was then
Wisdom the mirrored shield, or scorn the spear?
Or hadst thou waited the full cycle, when
Thy spirit should have filled its crescent sphere,
The monsters of life's waste had fled from thee like deer.

"The herded wolves, bold only to pursue;
The obscene ravens, clamorous o'er the dead;
The vultures to the conqueror's banner true,
Who feed where Desolation first has fed,

238. **the unpastured dragon**, the harsh and material world. 244. **herded wolves**, etc., a bitter attack upon the critics, who had advised the young surgeon-poet to go back to his pill-boxes.

And whose wings rain contagion—how they fled,
When like Apollo, from his golden bow,
The Pythian of the age one arrow sped 250
And smiled!—The spoilers tempt no second blow;
They fawn on the proud feet that spurn them lying low.

"The sun comes forth, and many reptiles spawn;
He sets, and each ephemeral insect then
Is gathered into death without a dawn, 255
And the immortal stars awake again;
So is it in the world of living men:
A godlike mind soars forth, in its delight
Making earth bare and veiling heaven, and when
It sinks, the swarms that dimmed or shared its light 260
Leave to its kindred lamps the spirit's awful night."

Thus ceased she; and the mountain shepherds came,
Their garlands sear, their magic mantles rent;
The Pilgrim of Eternity, whose fame
Over his living head like heaven is bent, 265
An early but enduring monument,
Came, veiling all the lightnings of his song
In sorrow; from her wilds Ierne sent
The sweetest lyrist of her saddest wrong,
And love taught grief to fall like music from his tongue. 270

Midst others of less note, came one frail Form,
A phantom among men, companionless
As the last cloud of an expiring storm
Whose thunder is its knell; he, as I guess,
Had gazed on Nature's naked loveliness, 275
Actæon-like, and now he fled astray
With feeble steps o'er the world's wilderness,
And his own thoughts, along that rugged way,
Pursued, like raging hounds, their father and their prey.

A pardlike Spirit beautiful and swift—
A Love in desolation masked—a Power 281
Girt round with weaknesses—it can scarce uplift
The weight of the superincumbent hour;
It is a dying lamp, a falling shower,
A breaking billow—even whilst we speak 285
Is it not broken? On the withering flower
The killing sun smiles brightly; on a cheek
The life can burn in blood, even while the heart may break.

His head was bound with pansies overblown,
And faded violets, white, and pied, and blue; 290
And a light spear topped with a cypress cone,
Round whose rude shaft dark ivy tresses grew
Yet dripping with the forest's noonday dew,
Vibrated, as the ever-beating heart
Shook the weak hand that grasped it; of that crew 295
He came the last, neglected and apart;
A herd-abandoned deer, struck by the hunter's dart.

All stood aloof, and at his partial moan
Smiled through their tears; well knew that gentle band
Who in another's fate now wept his own; 300

250. **Pythian.** Apollo slew a python at Delphi. Byron in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* is here said to have performed a like service with the critics. 264. **Pilgrim of Eternity,** Byron. 268. **Ierne.** Ireland. 269. **sweetest lyrist,** Moore. 271. **frail Form,** Shelley. His estimate of himself is touching and true. Shelley had fled to Italy to escape his family misfortunes in England.

276. **Actæon-like.** Actæon saw Diana bathing. In punishment his own dogs tore him to pieces.

As, in the accents of an unknown land,
He sung new sorrow; sad Urania scanned
The Stranger's mien, and murmured, "Who art thou?"
He answered not, but with a sudden hand
Made bare his branded and ensanguined brow, 305
Which was like Cain's or Christ's—Oh! that it should be so!

What softer voice is hushed over the dead?
Athwart what brow is that dark mantle thrown?
What form leans sadly o'er the white deathbed,
In mockery of monumental stone, 310
The heavy heart heaving without a moan?
If it be He, who, gentlest of the wise,
Taught, soothed, loved, honored the departed one,
Let me not vex with inharmonious sighs
The silence of that heart's accepted sacrifice. 315

Our Adonais has drunk poison—oh!
What deaf and viprous murderer could crown
Life's early cup with such a draft of woe?
The nameless worm would now itself disown.
It felt, yet could escape the magic tone 320
Whose prelude held all envy, hate, and wrong,
But what was howling in one breast alone,
Silent with expectation of the song,
Whose master's hand is cold, whose silver lyre unstrung.

Live thou, whose infamy is not thy fame! 325
Live! fear no heavier chastisement from me,
Thou noteless blot on a remembered name!
But be thyself, and know thyself to be!
And ever at thy season be thou free
To spill the venom when thy fangs o'erflow. 330
Remorse and self-contempt shall cling to thee;
Hot shame shall burn upon thy secret brow,
And like a beaten hound tremble thou shalt—as now.

Nor let us weep that our delight is fled
Far from these carrion kites that scream below; 335
He wakes or sleeps with the enduring dead;
Thou canst not soar where he is sitting now.—
Dust to the dust! but the pure spirit shall flow
Back to the burning fountain whence it came,
A portion of the Eternal, which must glow 340
Through time and change, unquenchably the same,
Whilst thy cold embers choke the sordid hearth of shame.

Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep—
He hath awakened from the dream of life—
'Tis we who, lost in stormy visions, keep 345
With phantoms an unprofitable strife,
And in mad trance strike with our, spirit's knife
Invulnerable nothings.—*We* decay
Like corpses in a charnel; fear and grief
Convulse us and consume us day by day, 350
And cold hopes swarm like worms within our living clay.

He has outsoared the shadow of our night;
Envy and calumny and hate and pain,
And that unrest which men miscall delight,

307. **softer voice**, Leigh Hunt, a devoted friend of Keats. 322. **howling**. The following lines refer to an anonymous critic of Keats in the *Quarterly Review*.

Can touch him not and torture not again;
From the contagion of the world's slow stain
He is secure, and now can never mourn
A heart grown cold, a head grown gray in vain;
Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,
With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn.

He lives, he wakes—'tis Death is dead, not he;
Mourn not for Adonais.—Thou young Dawn,
Turn all thy dew to splendor, for from thee
The spirit thou lamentest is not gone;
Ye caverns and ye forests, cease to moan!
Cease, ye faint flowers and fountains, and thou Air,
Which like a mourning veil thy scarf hadst thrown
O'er the abandoned earth, now leave it bare
Even to the joyous stars which smile on its despair!

He is made one with Nature; there is heard
His voice in all her music, from the moan
Of thunder, to the song of night's sweet bird;
He is a presence to be felt and known
In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,
Spreading itself where'er that Power may move
Which has withdrawn his being to its own;
Which wields the world with never-wearied love,
Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.

He is a portion of the loveliness
Which once he made more lovely; he doth bear
His part, while the one Spirit's plastic stress
Sweeps through the dull, dense world, compelling there
All new successions to the forms they wear;
Torturing th' unwilling dross that checks its flight
To its own likeness, as each mass may bear;
And bursting in its beauty and its might
From trees and beasts and men into the heaven's light.

The splendors of the firmament of time
May be eclipsed, but are extinguished not;
Like stars to their appointed height they climb
And death is a low mist which cannot blot
The brightness it may veil. When lofty thought
Lifts a young heart above its mortal lair,
And love and life contend in it for what
Shall be its earthly doom, the dead live there
And move like winds of light on dark and stormy air.

The inheritors of unfulfilled renown
Rose from their thrones, built beyond mortal thought,
Far in the Unapparent. Chatterton
Rose pale; his solemn agony had not
Yet faded from him. Sidney, as he fought
And as he fell and as he lived and loved,
Sublimely mild, a Spirit without spot,
Arose. And Lucan, by his death approved—
Oblivion, as they rose, shrank like a thing reproved.

399. **Chatterton** (1752-1770), a young poet who died of despair at the lack of recognition of his work. 401. **Sidney**, Sir Philip (1554-1586), the Elizabethan soldier-poet. 404. **Lucan** (39-65), a Roman poet who committed suicide lest Nero take vengeance upon him as a conspirator against the Emperor's life.

And many more, whose names on earth are dark
But whose transmitted effluence cannot die
So long as fire outlives the parent spark,
Rose, robed in dazzling immortality.
"Thou art become as one of us," they cry, 410
"It was for thee yon kingless sphere has long
Swung blind in unascended majesty,
Silent alone amid an Heaven of Song.
Assume thy wingéd throne, thou Vesper of our throng!"

Who mourns for Adonais? oh, come forth, 415
Fond wretch! and know thyself and him aright.
Clasp with thy panting soul the pendulous Earth;
As from a center, dart thy spirit's light
Beyond all worlds, until its spacious might
Satiate the void circumference. Then shrink 420
Even to a point within our day and night;
And keep thy heart light, lest it make thee sink,
When hope has kindled hope, and lured thee to the brink.

Or go to Rome, which is the sepulcher,
Oh, not of him, but of our joy; 'tis naught 425
That ages, empires, and religions there
Lie buried in the ravage they have wrought;
For such as he can lend—they borrow not
Glory from those who made the world their prey;
And he is gathered to the kings of thought 430
Who waged contention with their time's decay,
And of the past are all that cannot pass away.

414. **Vesper**, the Latin word for evening. 416. **Fond**, foolish.

Go thou to Rome—at once the Paradise,
The grave, the city, and the wilderness;
And where its wrecks like shattered mountains rise, 435
And flowering weeds and fragrant copses dress
The bones of Desolation's nakedness,
Pass, till the Spirit of the spot shall lead
Thy footsteps to a slope of green access
Where, like an infant's smile, over the dead, 440
A light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread.

And gray walls molder round, on which dull Time
Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand;
And one keen pyramid with wedge sublime,
Pavilioning the dust of him who planned 445
This refuge for his memory, doth stand
Like flame transformed to marble; and beneath,
A field is spread, on which a newer band
Have pitched in Heaven's smile their camp of death,
Welcoming him we lose with scarce extinguished breath. 450

Here pause. These graves are all too young as yet
To have outgrown the sorrow which consigned
Its charge to each; and if the seal is set,
Here, on one fountain of a mourning mind,
Break it not thou! too surely shalt thou find 455
Thine own well full, if thou returnest home,
Of tears and gall. From the world's bitter wind

439. **slope**, the Roman cemetery used by the English. It is outside the walls of Rome. Near it is the pyramidal tomb of Cestius referred to in line 444.

Seek shelter in the shadow of the tomb.
What Adonais is, why fear we to become?

The One remains, the many change and pass;
Heaven's light forever shines, earth's shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many-colored glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
Until Death tramples it to fragments. —Die,
If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek!
Follow where all is fled!—Rome's azure sky,
Flowers, ruins, statues, music, words, are weak
The glory they transfuse with fitting truth to speak.

Why linger, why turn back, why shrink, my Heart?
Thy hopes are gone before; from all things here
They have departed; thou shouldst now depart!
A light is past from the revolving year,
And man, and woman; and what still is dear
Attracts to crush, repels to make thee wither.
The soft sky smiles—the low wind whispers near;
'Tis Adonais calls! oh, hasten thither,
No more let Life divide what Death can join together.

That Light whose smile kindles the universe,
That Beauty in which all things work and move,
That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse
Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love
Which, through the web of being blindly wove
By man and beast and earth and air and sea,
Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
The fire for which all thirst, now beams on me,
Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

The breath whose might I have invoked in song
Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven,
Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng
Whose sails were never to the tempest given;
The massy earth and spheréd skies are riven!
I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar;
Whilst burning through the inmost veil of heaven,
The soul of Adonais, like a star,
Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are. (1821)

THE INDIAN SERENADE

I arise from dreams of thee
In the first sweet sleep of night,
When the winds are breathing low,
And the stars are shining bright;
I arise from dreams of thee,
And a spirit in my feet
Hath led me—who knows how!
To thy chamber window, Sweet!

The wandering airs they faint
On the dark, the silent stream—
And the Champak odors fail
Like sweet thoughts in a dream;
The nightingale's complaint,
It dies upon her heart—
As I must on thine,
O! beloved as thou art!

Oh, lift me from the grass!
I die! I faint! I fail!
Let thy love in kisses rain
On my lips and eyelids pale.
My cheek is cold and white, alas!
My heart beats loud and fast—
Oh, press it to thine own again,
Where it will break at last! (1822)

The Indian Serenade. 11. **Champak**, a spicy Indian tree.

FINAL CHORUS FROM HELLAS

The world's great age begins anew,
  The golden years return,
The earth doth like a snake renew
  Her winter weeds outworn;
Heaven smiles, and faiths and empires gleam, 5
Like wrecks of a dissolving dream.

A brighter Hellas rears its mountains
  From waves serener far;
A new Peneus rolls his fountains
  Against the morning-star. 10
Where fairer Tempes bloom, there sleep
Young Cyclads on a sunnier deep.

A loftier Argo cleaves the main,
  Fraught with a later prize;
Another Orpheus sings again, 15
  And loves, and weeps, and dies.
A new Ulysses leaves once more
Calypso for his native shore.

Oh, write no more the tale of Troy,
  If earth Death's scroll must be! 20
Nor mix with Laian rage the joy
  Which dawns upon the free;
Although a subtler Sphinx renew
Riddles of death Thebes never knew.

Another Athens shall arise, 25
  And to remoter time
Bequeath, like sunset to the skies,
  The splendor of its prime;
And leave, if naught so bright may live,
All earth can take or Heaven can give. 30

Saturn and Love their long repose
  Shall burst, more bright and good
Than all who fell, than One who rose,
  Than many unsubdued;
Not gold, not blood, their altar dowers,
But votive tears and symbol flowers. 36

Final Chorus from Hellas. Shelley believed in the final triumph of love. A new and greater Greece would arise with a Vale of Tempe (in Thessaly) through which a new River Peneus would flow. The Cyclades Islands of the Aegean would again be poet-haunted. Greek legend would flourish again with the Argonauts, who sailed for the Golden Fleece, with Orpheus, the legendary sweet singer of Greece, with the crafty Ulysses and his witch hostess Calypso. Such tragedies as those of the Trojan War and the incestuous House of Laius, whose son Oedipus married his own mother, would be unknown. The riddles of the world, like that of the Sphinx which Oedipus guessed, would be faced, and solved. The first golden age of Saturn would return. **4. weeds**, garments. **33. all who fell**, the gods of Greece and Rome. **One who rose**, Christ. **34. many unsubdued**, the heathen gods of the East.

O cease! must hate and death return?
  Cease! must men kill and die?
Cease! drain not to its dregs the urn
  Of bitter prophecy. 40
The world is weary of the past,
O might it die or rest at last!

(1822)

TO NIGHT

Swiftly walk over the western wave,
    Spirit of Night!
Out of the misty eastern cave—
Where, all the long and lone daylight,
Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear 5
Which make thee terrible and dear—
    Swift be thy flight!

Wrap thy form in a mantle gray,
    Star-inwrought!
Blind with thine hair the eyes of Day; 10
Kiss her until she be wearied out.
Then wander o'er city and sea and land,
Touching all with thine opiate wand—
    Come, long-sought!

When I arose and saw the dawn, 15
    I sighed for thee;
When light rode high, and the dew was gone,
And noon lay heavy on flower and tree,
And the weary Day turned to her rest,
Lingering like an unloved guest, 20
    I sighed for thee.

Thy brother Death came, and cried,
    "Wouldst thou me?"
Thy sweet child Sleep, the filmy-eyed,
Murmured like a noontide bee, 25
"Shall I nestle near thy side?
Wouldst thou me?"—And I replied,
    "No, not thee!"

Death will come when thou art dead,
    Soon, too soon— 30
Sleep will come when thou art fled.
Of neither would I ask the boon
I ask of thee, beloved Night—
Swift be thine approaching flight,
    Come soon, soon!

(1824)

A LAMENT

O world! O life! O time!
On whose last steps I climb,
  Trembling at that where I had stood before;
When will return the glory of your prime?
  No more—oh, nevermore!

Out of the day and night
A joy has taken flight;
  Fresh spring, and summer, and winter hoar,
Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight
  No more—Oh, nevermore!

(1824)

TO———

Music, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory—
Odors, when sweet violets sicken,
Live within the sense they quicken,

Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,
Are heaped for the beloved's bed;
And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone
Love itself shall slumber on.

(1824)

LINES

  When the lamp is shattered,
The light in the dust lies dead—
  When the cloud is scattered,
The rainbow's glory is shed.
  When the lute is broken,
Sweet tones are remembered not;
  When the lips have spoken,
Loved accents are soon forgot.

  As music and splendor
Survive not the lamp and the lute,
  The heart's echoes render
No song when the spirit is mute—
  No song but sad dirges,
Like the wind through a ruined cell,
  Or the mournful surges
That ring the dead seaman's knell.

  When hearts have once mingled,
Love first leaves the well-built nest—
  The weak one is singled
To endure what it once possessed.
  O Love! who bewailest
The frailty of all things here,
  Why choose you the frailest
For your cradle, your home, and your bier?

  Its passions will rock thee
As the storms rock the ravens on high;
  Bright reason will mock thee,
Like the sun from a wintry sky.
  From thy nest every rafter
Will rot, and thine eagle home
  Leave thee naked to laughter,
When leaves fall and cold winds come.

(1824)

*JOHN KEATS (1795-1821)

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER

Much have I traveled in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
  Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
  That deep-browed Homer ruled as his demesne—
  Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold.
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez, when with eagle eyes
  He stared at the Pacific—and all his men
Looked at each other with a wild surmise—
  Silent, upon a peak in Darien. (1817)

*See headnotes for Keats on pages 183 and 190. Keats had so keen a sense of beauty that he appreciated at once and completely the art of Homer, the Parthenon sculptures in the British Museum (the Elgin Marbles), and Greek vases. His poetry is an immediate emotional reaction to the visible manifestations of beauty in the world of nature and art.

On First Looking into Chapman's Homer. Title. **Chapman**, the Elizabethan dramatist and poet, who translated the *Iliad* (1610-1611). 6. **demesne**, domain. 11. **Cortez**. Balboa, not Cortez, discovered the Pacific from Mt. Darien, on the Isthmus of Panama (1513).

WHEN I HAVE FEARS THAT I MAY CEASE TO BE

When I have fears that I may cease to be
Before my pen has gleaned my teeming brain,
Before high-piléd books, in charact'ry,
Hold like rich garners the full-ripened grain;
When I behold, upon the night's starred face, 5
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
And think that I may never live to trace
Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance;
And when I feel, fair creature of an hour,
That I shall never look upon thee more,
Never have relish in the faëry power 11
Of unreflecting love—then on the shore
Of the wide world I stand alone, and think,
Till love and fame to nothingness do sink. 1817 (1848)

ON SEEING THE ELGIN MARBLES

My spirit is too weak—mortality
Weighs heavily on me like unwilling sleep,
And each imagined pinnacle and steep
Of godlike hardship tells me I must die
Like a sick eagle looking at the sky. 5
Yet 'tis a gentle luxury to weep
That I have not the cloudy winds to keep,
Fresh for the opening of the morning's eye.
Such dim-conceivéd glories of the brain
Bring round the heart an undescribable feud; 10
So do these wonders a most dizzy pain,
That mingles Grecian grandeur with the rude
Wasting of old Time—with a billowy main—
A sun—a shadow of a magnitude. (1817)

When I Have Fears. 3. **charact'ry**, writing.
On Seeing the Elgin Marbles. Lord Elgin brought a superb collection of Greek sculpture to England (1801-1803). Among them are many statues and bas-reliefs from the Parthenon.

ON THE SEA

It keeps eternal whisperings around
Desolate shores, and with its mighty swell
Gluts twice ten thousand caverns, till the spell
Of Hecate leaves them their old shadowy sound.
Often 'tis in such gentle temper found, 5
That scarcely will the very smallest shell
Be moved for days from whence it sometime fell,
When last the winds of heaven were unbound.
O ye! who have your eyeballs vexed and tired,
Feast them upon the wideness of the sea; 10
O ye! whose ears are dinned with uproar rude,
Or fed too much with cloying melody—
Sit ye near some old cavern's mouth, and brood
Until ye start, as if the sea-nymphs quired! (1817)

BRIGHT STAR! WOULD I WERE STEADFAST AS THOU ART

Bright star! would I were steadfast as thou art—
Not in lone splendor hung aloft the night,
And watching, with eternal lids apart,
Like Nature's patient sleepless Eremite,
The moving waters at their priestlike task 5
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,
Or gazing on the new soft-fallen mask
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors—
No—yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,
Pillowed upon my fair love's ripening breast, 10
To feel forever its soft fall and swell,

On the Sea. 4. **Hecate**, a late Greek goddess of magic and of night. 14. **quired**, sang.
Bright Star. Written by Keats to Fanny Brawne when he was on shipboard, about to sail for Italy, where he died. 4. **Eremite**, hermit, the moon.

Awake forever in a sweet unrest,
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
And so live ever—or else swoon to death.

1820 (1848)

SONG OF THE INDIAN MAID

From ENDYMION

O Sorrow!
Why dost borrow
The natural hue of health, from vermeil lips?—
To give maiden blushes
To the white rose bushes? 5
Or is it thy dewy hand the daisy tips?

O Sorrow!
Why dost borrow
The lustrous passion from a falcon-eye?—
To give the glowworm light? 10
Or, on a moonless night,
To tinge, on siren shores, the salt sea-spry?

O Sorrow!
Why dost borrow
The mellow ditties from a mourning tongue?— 15
To give at evening pale
Unto the nightingale,
That thou mayst listen the cold dews among?

O Sorrow!
Why dost borrow 20
Heart's lightness from the merriment of May?—
A lover would not tread
A cowslip on the head,
Though he should dance from eve till peep of day—
Nor any drooping flower 25
Held sacred for thy bower,
Wherever he may sport himself and play.

To Sorrow
I bade good-morrow,
And thought to leave her far away behind; 30
But cheerly, cheerly,
She loves me dearly;
She is so constant to me, and so kind:
I would deceive her,
And so leave her, 35
But ah! she is so constant and so kind.

Beneath my palm-trees, by the river side,
I sat a-weeping. In the whole world wide
There was no one to ask me why I wept—
And so I kept 40
Brimming the water-lily cups with tears
Cold as my fears.
Beneath my palm-trees, by the river side,
I sat a-weeping. What enamored bride,
Cheated by shadowy wooer from the clouds, 45
But hides and shrouds
Beneath dark palm-trees by a river side?

And as I sat, over the light blue hills
There came a noise of revelers. The rills
Into the wide stream came of purple hue— 50
'Twas Bacchus and his crew!
The earnest trumpet spake, and silver thrills
From kissing cymbals made a merry din—
'Twas Bacchus and his kin!
Like to a moving vintage down they came, 55
Crowned with green leaves, and faces all on flame;
All madly dancing through the pleasant valley,
To scare thee, Melancholy!
O then, O then, thou wast a simple name!
And I forgot thee, as the berried holly
By shepherds is forgotten, when in June 61
Tall chestnuts keep away the sun and moon—
I rushed into the folly!

Within his car, aloft, young Bacchus stood,

Song of the Indian Maid. 3. **vermeil**, red. 12. **sea-spry**, sea-spray.

Trifling his ivy-dart, in dancing mood,
With sidelong laughing; 66
And little rills of crimson wine imbrued
His plump white arms and shoulders, enough white
For Venus' pearly bite; 69
And near him rode Silenus on his ass,
Pelted with flowers as he on did pass
Tipsily quaffing.

"Whence came ye, merry Damsels! whence came ye,
So many, and so many, and such glee?
Why have ye left your bowers desolate, 75
Your lutes, and gentler fate?"—
"We follow Bacchus! Bacchus on the wing,
A-conquering!
Bacchus, young Bacchus! good or ill betide,
We dance before him thorough kingdoms wide— 80
Come hither, lady fair, and joinéd be
To our wild minstrelsy!"

"Whence came ye, jolly Satyrs! whence came ye,
So many, and so many, and such glee?
Why have ye left your forest haunts, why left 85
Your nuts in oak-tree cleft?"—
"For wine, for wine we left our kernel tree;
For wine we left our heath, and yellow brooms,
And cold mushrooms;
For wine we follow Bacchus through the earth; 90
Great god of breathless cups and chirping mirth!
Come hither, lady fair, and joinéd be
To our mad minstrelsy!"

Over wide streams and mountains great we went,
And, save when Bacchus kept his ivy tent, 95
Onward the tiger and the leopard pants,
With Asian elephants.
Onward these myriads—with song and dance,
With zebras striped, and sleek Arabians' prance,
Web-footed alligators, crocodiles, 100
Bearing upon their scaly backs, in files,
Plump infant laughers mimicking the coil
Of seamen, and stout galley-rower's toil.
With toying oars and silken sails they glide,
Nor care for wind and tide. 105

Mounted on panthers' furs and lions' manes,
From rear to van they scour about the plains;
A three-days' journey in a moment done;
And always, at the rising of the sun,
About the wilds they hunt with spear and horn, 110
On spleenful unicorn.

I saw Osirian Egypt kneel adown
Before the vine-wreath crown!
I saw parched Abyssinia rouse and sing
To the silver cymbals' ring! 115
I saw the whelming vintage hotly pierce
Old Tartary the fierce!
The kings of Ind their jewel-scepters vail,
And from their treasures scatter pearléd hail;
Great Brahma from his mystic heaven groans, 120
And all his priesthood moans,
Before young Bacchus' eye-wink turning pale.
Into these regions came I, following him,
Sick-hearted, weary—so I took a whim
To stray away into these forests drear,
Alone, without a peer. 126
And I have told thee all thou mayest hear.

Young Stranger!
I've been a ranger
In search of pleasure throughout every clime; 130
Alas! 'tis not for me!
Bewitched I sure must be,
To lose in grieving all my maiden prime.

70. **Silenus**, an aged woodland god, half man and half goat. 88. **brooms**, heathers.

111. **spleenful**, fiery. 112. **Osirian**, pertaining to Osiris, the Egyptian god of the underworld. 118. **vail**, lower. 120. **Brahma**, the first member of the Hindu trinity. He is the soul of the universe.

Come then, Sorrow,
Sweetest Sorrow! 135
Like an own babe I nurse thee on my breast.
I thought to leave thee,
And deceive thee,
But now of all the world I love thee best.

There is not one, 140
No, no, not one
But thee to comfort a poor lonely maid;
Thou art her mother,
And her brother,
Her playmate, and her wooer in the shade. (1818)

ROBIN HOOD

No! those days are gone away,
And their hours are old and gray,
And their minutes buried all
Under the down-trodden pall
Of the leaves of many years. 5
Many times have winter's shears,
Frozen north, and chilling east,
Sounded tempests to the feast
Of the forest's whispering fleeces,
Since men knew nor rent nor leases. 10

No, the bugle sounds no more,
And the twanging bow no more;
Silent is the ivory shrill
Past the heath and up the hill;
There is no mid-forest laugh, 15
Where lone Echo gives the half
To some wight, amazed to hear
Jesting, deep in forest drear.

On the fairest time of June
You may go, with sun or moon, 20
Or the seven stars to light you,
Or the polar ray to right you;
But you never may behold
Little John, or Robin bold;
Never one, of all the clan, 25
Thrumming on an empty can
Some old hunting ditty, while
He doth his green way beguile
To fair hostess Merriment,
Down beside the pasture Trent; 30
For he left the merry tale
Messenger for spicy ale.

Gone, the merry morris din;
Gone, the song of Gamelyn;
Gone, the tough-belted outlaw 35
Idling in the "grené shawe";
All are gone away and past!
And if Robin should be cast
Sudden from his turfed grave,
And if Marian should have 40
Once again her forest days,
She would weep, and he would craze:
He would swear, for all his oaks,
Fall'n beneath the dockyard strokes,
Have rotted on the briny seas; 45
She would weep that her wild bees
Sang not to her—strange! that honey
Can't be got without hard money!

So it is; yet let us sing,
Honor to the old bowstring! 50
Honor to the bugle-horn!
Honor to the woods unshorn!
Honor to the Lincoln green!
Honor to the archer keen!
Honor to tight Little John 55
And the horse he rode upon!
Honor to bold Robin Hood,
Sleeping in the underwood!
Honor to Maid Marian,
And to all the Sherwood-clan! 60
Though their days have hurried by,
Let us two a burden try.

(1820)

Robin Hood. 13. **ivory**, horn. 30. **Trent**, a river that runs north through Nottinghamshire and Sherwood Forest.

33. **morris**, a square dance. 34. **Gamelyn**, a young medieval nobleman who became leader of a band of robbers. 36. **grené shawe** (green wood), from the Robin Hood ballads. 62. **burden**, chorus.

LINES ON THE MERMAID TAVERN

Souls of Poets dead and gone,
What Elysium have ye known,
Happy field or mossy cavern,
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?
Have ye tippled drink more fine 5
Than mine host's Canary wine?
Or are fruits of Paradise
Sweeter than those dainty pies
Of venison? O generous food!
Dressed as though bold Robin Hood 10
Would, with his maid Marian,
Sup and bowse from horn and can.

Lines on the Mermaid Tavern. The Mermaid Tavern was a favorite meeting-place of Ben Jonson and other Elizabethan poets. 12. **bowse**, drink.

I have heard that on a day
Mine host's signboard flew away,
Nobody knew whither, till 15
An astrologer's old quill
To a sheepskin gave the story—
Said he saw you in your glory,
Underneath a new old sign
Sipping beverage divine, 20
And pledging with contented smack
The Mermaid in the Zodiac.

Souls of Poets dead and gone,
What Elysium have ye known,
Happy field or mossy cavern, 25
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?

(1820)

ODE: BARDS OF PASSION AND OF MIRTH

WRITTEN ON THE BLANK PAGE BEFORE BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER'S TRAGI-COMEDY "THE FAIR MAID OF THE INN"

Bards of Passion and of Mirth,
Ye have left your souls on earth!
Have ye souls in heaven, too,
Doubled-lived in regions new?
Yes, and those of heaven commune 5
With the spheres of sun and moon;
With the noise of fountains wondrous,
And the parle of voices thund'rous;
With the whisper of heaven's trees
And one another, in soft ease 10
Seated on Elysian lawns
Browsed by none but Dian's fawns;
Underneath large bluebells tented,
Where the daisies are rose-scented,
And the rose herself has got 15
Perfume which on earth is not;
Where the nightingale doth sing
Not a senseless, trancéd thing,
But divine, melodious truth;
Philosophic numbers smooth; 20
Tales and golden histories
Of heaven and its mysteries.

Thus ye live on high, and then
On the earth ye live again;
And the souls ye left behind you 25
Teach us, here, the way to find you,
Where your other souls are joying,
Never slumbered, never cloying.

Here, your earthborn souls still speak
To mortals, of their little week; 30
Of their sorrows and delights;
Of their passions and their spites;
Of their glory and their shame;
What doth strengthen and what maim.
Thus ye teach us, every day, 35
Wisdom, though fled far away.

Bards of Passion and of Mirth,
Ye have left your souls on earth!
Ye have souls in heaven too,
Double lived in regions new!

(1820)

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

Thou still unravished bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Silvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape 5
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens loath?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy? 10

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endeared,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone;
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave 15
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold lover, never, never canst thou kiss
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;

Ode on a Grecian Urn. On Greek vases, whether painted or sculptured, two or three scenes were placed around the middle of the vase. The poetic beliefs of Keats are here completely revealed.

She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
Forever wilt thou love, and she be fair! 20

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
Forever piping songs forever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love! 25
Forever warm and still to be enjoyed,
Forever panting, and forever young,
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloyed,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue. 30

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands dressed?
What little town by river or sea shore, 35
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return. 40

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity. Cold Pastoral! 45
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty"—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know. (1820)

41. **brede**, decorative frieze.

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk.
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thine happiness— 6
That thou, light wingéd Dryad of the trees,
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of summer in full-throated ease. 10

Oh, for a draught of vintage that hath been
Cooled a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!
Oh, for a beaker full of the warm South, 15
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stainéd mouth;
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim— 20

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,

Ode to a Nightingale. 4. **Lethe-wards**, to oblivion. Whoever drank of the river Lethe in Hades forgot the past. 13. **Flora**, the Roman goddess of flowers. 14. **Provençal song.** The troubadours flourished in Provence during the Middle Ages. 16. **Hippocrene**, a spring on Mt. Helicon, sacred to the Muses.

The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs, 25
Where youth grows pale, and specter-thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs,
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond tomorrow. 30

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night, 35
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Clustered around by all her starry Fays;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding, mossy ways. 40

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalméd darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild; 45
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast fading violets covered up in leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves. 50

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Called him soft names in many a muséd rime,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die, 55
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
To thy high requiem become a sod. 60

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path 65
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that ofttimes hath
Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn. 70

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is famed to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades 75
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hillside; and now 'tis buried deep
In the next valley-glades:
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music—do I wake or sleep? (1820)

32. **pards**, leopards. 37. **Fays**, fairies.

66. **Ruth**, the Moabitish daughter-in-law of Naomi. For her fidelity see the Book of Ruth in the Bible.

ODE ON MELANCHOLY

No, no, go not to Lethe, neither twist
Wolf's-bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine;
Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kissed
By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine;
Make not your rosary of yew-berries, 5
Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be
Your mournful Psyche, nor the downy owl
A partner in your sorrow's mysteries;
For shade to shade will come too drowsily,
And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul. 10

But when the melancholy fit shall fall
Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,
That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,
And hides the green hills in an April shroud,
Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose, 15
Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,
Or on the wealth of globéd peonies.
Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,
Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,
And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes. 20

She dwells with Beauty—Beauty that must die;
And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips,
Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh,
Turning to poison while the bee mouth sips.
Aye, in the very temple of Delight 25
Veiled Melancholy has her sovran shrine,
Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue
Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine.
His soul shall taste the sadness of her might,
And be among her cloudy trophies hung. (1820)

Ode on Melancholy. 2. **Wolf's-bane,** aconite, a poisonous flower. 4. **nightshade,** a poisonous plant. **Proserpine,** the Grecian goddess of the lower world. 5. **yew-berries.** The yew-tree was symbolic of death. 7. **Psyche,** the beloved of Cupid, who lost him for a while because of her curiosity and who regained him only after long wanderings and many labors.

TO AUTUMN

Season of mist and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;
To bend with apples the mossed cottage-trees, 5
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease, 10
For summer has o'er-brimmed their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind; 15
Or on a half-reaped furrow sound asleep,
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twinéd flowers:
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook; 20
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours.

Where are the songs of spring? Aye, where are they?

Think not of them, thou hast thy music too—
While barréd clouds bloom the soft-dying day, 25
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river sallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn; 30
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies. (1820)

*JAMES CLARENCE MANGAN (1803-1849)

THE NAMELESS ONE

Roll forth, my song, like the rushing river,
That sweeps along to the mighty sea;
God will inspire me while I deliver
My soul of thee!

Tell thou the world, when my bones lie whitening 5
Amid the last homes of youth and eld,
That once there was one whose veins ran lightning
No eye beheld.

Tell how his boyhood was one drear night-hour,
How shone for him, through his griefs and gloom, 10
No star of all heaven sends to light our
Path to the tomb.

Roll on, my song, and to after ages
Tell how, disdaining all earth can give,
He would have taught men, from wisdom's pages, 15
The way to live.

And tell how trampled, derided, hated,
And worn by weakness, disease, and wrong,
He fled for shelter to God, who mated
His soul with song. 20

—With song which alway, sublime or vapid,
Flowed like a rill in the morning beam,
Perchance not deep, but intense and rapid—
A mountain stream.

Tell how this Nameless, condemned for years long 25
To herd with demons from hell beneath,
Saw things that made him, with groans and tears, long
For even death.

Go on to tell how, with genius wasted,
Betrayed in friendship, befooled in love, 30
With spirit shipwrecked, and young hopes blasted,
He still, still strove;

Till, spent with toil, dreeing death for others
And some whose hands should have wrought for him,
(If children live not for sires and mothers), 35
His mind grew dim;

And he fell far through that pit abysmal,
The gulf and grave of Maginn and Burns,
And pawned his soul for the devil's dismal
Stock of returns. 40

But yet redeemed it in days of darkness,
And shapes and signs of the final wrath,
When death, in hideous and ghastly starkness,
Stood on his path.

And tell how now, amid wreck and sorrow, 45

25. **bloom**, make bloom.
*Considered by some to be the greatest Irish poet of the nineteenth century. His work, however, is very uneven. The Irish poets now begin to bring back the Celtic spirit into English literature.

33. **dreeing**, enduring. 38. **Maginn**, William (1793-1842), a versatile Irish writer.

And want, and sickness, and houseless nights,
He bides in calmness the silent morrow,
That no ray lights.

And lives he still, then? Yes! Old and hoary
At thirty-nine, from despair and woe,
He lives, enduring what future story 51
Will never know.

Him grant a grave to, ye pitying noble,
Deep in your bosoms; there let him dwell!
He, too, had tears for all souls in trouble,
Here and in hell.

(1849)

*GERALD GRIFFIN (1803-1840)

EILEEN AROON

When, like the early rose,
Eileen Aroon!
Beauty in childhood blows,
Eileen Aroon!
When, like a diadem, 5
Buds blush around the stem,
Which is the fairest gem?—
Eileen Aroon!

Is it the laughing eye,
Eileen Aroon! 10
Is it the timid sigh,
Eileen Aroon!
Is it the tender tone,
Soft as the stringed harp's moan?
Oh, it is truth alone— 15
Eileen Aroon!

When, like the rising day,
Eileen Aroon!
Love sends his early ray,
Eileen Aroon! 20
What makes his dawning glow,
Changeless through joy or woe?
Only the constant know—
Eileen Aroon!

I know a valley fair, 25
Eileen Aroon!
I knew a cottage there,
Eileen Aroon!
Far in that valley's shade
I knew a gentle maid, 30
Flower of a hazel glade—
Eileen Aroon!

Who in the song so sweet?
Eileen Aroon!
Who in the dance so fleet? 35
Eileen Aroon!
Dear were her charms to me,
Dearer her laughter free,
Dearest her constancy—
Eileen Aroon! 40

Were she no longer true,
Eileen Aroon!
What should her lover do?
Eileen Aroon!
Fly with his broken chain 45
Far o'er the sounding main,
Never to love again—
Eileen Aroon!

Youth must with time decay,
Eileen Aroon! 50
Beauty must fade away,
Eileen Aroon!
Castles are sacked in war,
Chieftains are scattered far,
Truth is a fixéd star— 55
Eileen Aroon!

(c. 1842)

*An Irish poet.
Eileen Aroon. Title. *Aroon* means "my treasure."

*FRANCIS MAHONY (1804?-1866)

THE BELLS OF SHANDON

With deep affection,
And recollection,
I often think of
Those Shandon bells,
Whose sounds so wild would, 5
In the days of childhood,
Fling around my cradle
Their magic spells.
On this I ponder
Where'er I wander, 10
And thus grow fonder,
Sweet Cork, of thee;
With thy bells of Shandon,
That sound so grand on
The pleasant waters 15
Of the River Lee.

*An Irish poet and novelist, known as Father Prout.
The Bells of Shandon. Title. St. Anne Shandon's Church is in the town of Cork, Ireland.

I've heard bells chiming
Full many a clime in,
Tolling sublime in
  Cathedral shrine, 20
While at a glib rate
Brass tongues would vibrate—
But all their music
  Spoke naught like thine;
For memory, dwelling 25
On each proud swelling
Of the belfry knelling
  Its bold notes free,
Made the bells of Shandon
Sound far more grand on 30
The pleasant waters
  Of the River Lee.

I've heard bells tolling
Old Adrian's Mole in,
Their thunder rolling 35
  From the Vatican,
And cymbals glorious
Swinging uproarious
In the gorgeous turrets
  Of Notre Dame; 40
But thy sounds were sweeter
Than the dome of Peter
Flings o'er the Tiber,
  Pealing solemnly—
Oh, the bells of Shandon 45
Sound far more grand on
The pleasant waters
  Of the River Lee.

There's a bell in Moscow,
While on tower and kiosk O! 50
In Saint Sophia
  The Turkman gets,
And loud in air
Calls men to prayer
From the tapering summits 55
  Of tall minarets.
Such empty phantom
I freely grant them;
But there's an anthem
  More dear to me— 60
'Tis the bells of Shandon,
That sound so grand on
The pleasant waters
  Of the River Lee. (1834)

34. **Adrian's Mole**, the tomb of Hadrian or Castel St. Angelo in Rome. 40. **Notre Dame**, a cathedral of Paris. 51. **Saint Sophia**, a Byzantine church in Constantinople, now a mosque. The Moslems do not use bells to call to prayer, but muezzins, or criers.

*EDWARD FITZGERALD (1809-1883)

RUBÁIYÁT

OF OMAR KHAYYÁM OF NAISHÁPÚR

[SELECTIONS]

I

Wake! For the sun, who scattered into flight
The stars before him from the field of night,
  Drives night along with them from heav'n, and strikes
The Sultán's turret with a shaft of light.

VII

Come, fill the cup, and in the fire of spring
Your winter-garment of repentance fling;
  The bird of time has but a little way
To flutter—and the bird is on the wing.

XII

A book of verses underneath the bough,
A jug of wine, a loaf of bread—and Thou
  Beside me singing in the wilderness—
Oh, wilderness were paradise enow!

XIII

Some for the glories of this world; and some
Sigh for the Prophet's Paradise to come;
  Ah, take the cash, and let the credit go,
Nor heed the rumble of a distant drum!

XIV

Look to the blowing rose about us—"Lo,
Laughing," she says, "into the world I blow,
  At once the silken tassel of my purse
Tear, and its treasure on the garden throw."

*Fitzgerald's translation of Omar Khayyám, the eleventh-century Persian astronomer and poet, introduced to the English, in poetry, the Eastern philosophy of hedonism.

XV

And those who husbanded the golden grain,
And those who flung it to the winds like rain,
Alike to no such aureate earth are turned
As, buried once, men want dug up again.

XVI

The worldly hope men set their hearts upon
Turns ashes—or it prospers; and anon,
Like snow upon the desert's dusty face,
Lighting a little hour or two—is gone.

XVII

Think, in this battered caravanserai
Whose portals are alternate night and day,
How sultan after sultan with his pomp
Abode his destined hour, and went his way.

XVIII

They say the lion and the lizard keep
The courts where Jamshyd gloried and drank deep;
And Bahrám, that great hunter—the wild ass
Stamps o'er his head, but cannot break his sleep.

XIX

I sometimes think that never blows so red
The rose as where some buried Caesar bled;
That every hyacinth the garden wears
Dropped in her lap from some once lovely head.

XX

And this reviving herb whose tender green
Fledges the river-lip on which we lean—
Ah, lean upon it lightly! for who knows
From what once lovely lip it springs unseen!

XXI

Oh, my beloved, fill the cup that clears
Today of past regret and future fears:
Tomorrow!—Why, tomorrow I may be
Myself with yesterday's sev'n thousand years.

XXII

For some we loved, the loveliest and the best
That from his vintage rolling Time hath prest,
Have drunk their cup a round or two before,
And one by one crept silently to rest.

XXIII

And we, that now make merry in the room
They left, and Summer dresses in new bloom,
Ourselves must we beneath the couch of earth
Descend—ourselves to make a couch—for whom?

XXIV

Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,
Before we, too, into the dust descend;
Dust into dust, and under dust to lie,
Sans wine, sans song, sans singer, and—sans end!

XXV

Alike for those who for Today prepare,
And those that after some Tomorrow stare,
A muezzin from the tower of darkness cries,
"Fools! your reward is neither here nor there."

Stanza XVII. **caravanserai**, caravan inn.
Stanza XVIII. **Jamshyd**, a mythical Persian king. **Bahrám**, a Persian king of the Sassanid line, who possessed seven marvelous palaces.

Stanza XXIV. **Sans**, without.
Stanza XXV. **muezzin**, the Mohammedan crier of the hour of prayer.

XXVI

Why, all the saints and sages who discussed
Of the two worlds so wisely—they are thrust
Like foolish prophets forth; their words to scorn
Are scattered, and their mouths are stopped with dust.

XXVII

Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and saint, and heard great argument
About it and about; but evermore
Came out by the same door where in I went.

LXIII

Oh threats of hell and hopes of paradise!
One thing at least is certain—*This* life flies;
One thing is certain and the rest is lies:
The flower that once has blown forever dies.

LXIV

Strange, is it not? that of the myriads who
Before us passed the door of darkness through,
Not one returns to tell us of the road,
Which to discover we must travel, too.

LXV

The revelations of devout and learned
Who rose before us, and as prophets burned,
Are all but stories, which, awoke from sleep,
They told their comrades, and to sleep returned.

LXVI

I sent my soul through the invisible,
Some letter of that after-life to spell;
And by and by my soul returned to me,
And answered, "I myself am heaven and hell":

LXVII

Heaven but the vision of fulfilled desire,
And hell the shadow from a soul on fire,
Cast on the darkness into which ourselves,
So late emerged from, shall so soon expire.

LXVIII

We are no other than a moving row
Of magic shadow-shapes that come and go
Round with the sun-illumined lantern held
In midnight by the master of the show;

LXIX

But helpless pieces of the game He plays
Upon this checkerboard of nights and days;
Hither and thither moves, and checks, and slays,
And one by one back in the closet lays.

LXX

The ball no question makes of ayes and noes,
But here or there as strikes the player goes;
And He that tossed you down into the field,
He knows about it all—HE knows—HE knows!

LXXI

The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,
Moves on. Nor all your piety nor wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
Nor all your tears wash out a word of it.

XCVI

Yet ah, that spring should vanish with the rose!
That Youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close!
The nightingale that in the branches sang,
Ah, whence, and whither flown again, who knows!

XCVII

Would but the desert of the fountain yield
One glimpse—if dimly, yet indeed, revealed,
To which the fainting traveler might spring,
As springs the trampled herbage of the field!

XCVIII

Would but some wingéd angel ere too late
Arrest the yet unfolded roll of Fate,
And make the stern Recorder otherwise
Enregister, or quite obliterate!

XCIX

Ah, Love! could you and I with Him conspire
To grasp this sorry scheme of things entire,
Would not we shatter it to bits—and then
Remold it nearer to the heart's desire!

C

Yon rising moon that looks for us again—
How oft hereafter will she wax and wane;
How oft hereafter rising look for us
Through this same garden—and for *one* in vain!

CI

And when like her, O Sákí, you shall pass
Among the guests star-scattered on the grass,
And in your joyous errand reach the spot
Where I made One—turn down an empty Glass!

(1859)

Stanza CI. **Sákí**, cupbearer.

*ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING (1806-1861)

SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE

[SELECTIONS]

I

I thought once how Theocritus had sung
Of the sweet years, the dear and wished-for years,
Who each one in a gracious hand appears
To bear a gift for mortals, old or young.
And, as I mused it in his antique tongue,
I saw, in gradual vision through my tears, 6
The sweet, sad years, the melancholy years,
Those of my own life, who by turns had flung
A shadow across me. Straightway I was 'ware,
So weeping, how a mystic Shape did move 10
Behind me, and drew me backward by the hair;
And a voice said in mastery, while I strove—
"Guess now who holds thee?" — "Death," I said. But, there,
The silver answer rang—"Not Death, but Love."

III

Unlike are we, unlike, O princely Heart!
Unlike our uses and our destinies.
Our ministering two angels look surprise
On one another, as they strike athwart
Their wings in passing. Thou, bethink thee, art 5
A guest for queens to social pageantries,
With gages from a hundred brighter eyes

*Elizabeth Barrett was a truly great and poetic spirit. Because of an accident in early youth she was confined to her room, and her father chose to regard her as an invalid. Her marriage with Browning in 1846, without her father's knowledge, opened a new life to her of which the most perfect memorial is the series of *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, so-named because Browning often called her in fun his little Portuguese, alluding to her poem "Caterina to Camoens," which he especially admired. Compare with these sonnets those of Shakespeare (pages 363 ff).

Sonnet I. 1. **Theocritus**, a Greek pastoral poet of the third century B. C.

Sonnet III. 7. **gages**, pledges.

Than tears even can make mine, to play thy part
Of chief musician. What hast *thou* to do
With looking from the lattice-lights at me, 10
A poor, tired, wandering singer, singing through
The dark, and leaning up a cypress tree?
The chrism is on thine head—on mine, the dew—
And Death must dig the level where these agree.

VI

Go from me. Yet I feel that I shall stand
Henceforward in thy shadow. Nevermore,
Alone upon the threshold of my door
Of individual life I shall command
The uses of my soul, nor lift my hand 5
Serenely in the sunshine as before,
Without the sense of that which I forbore—
Thy touch upon the palm. The widest land
Doom takes to part us, leaves thy heart in mine
With pulses that beat double. What I do 10
And what I dream include thee, as the wine
Must taste of its own grapes. And when I sue
God for myself, he hears that name of thine,
And sees within my eyes the tears of two.

VIII

What can I give thee back, O liberal
And princely giver, who hast brought the gold
And purple of thine heart, unstained, untold,
And laid them on the outside of the wall 4
For such as I to take or leave withal,
In unexpected largesse? Am I cold,
Ungrateful, that for these most manifold
High gifts, I render nothing back at all?
Not so; not cold—but very poor instead.
Ask God who knows. For frequent tears have run 10
The colors from my life, and left so dead
And pale a stuff, it were not fitly done
To give the same as pillow to thy head.
Go farther! let it serve to trample on.

XIV

If thou must love me, let it be for naught
Except for love's sake only. Do not say
"I love her for her smile—her look—her way
Of speaking gently—for a trick of thought
That falls in well with mine, and certes brought 5
A sense of pleasant ease on such a day"—
For these things in themselves, Beloved, may
Be changed, or change for thee—and love, so wrought,
May be unwrought so. Neither love me for
Thine own dear pity's wiping my cheeks dry— 10
A creature might forget to weep, who bore
Thy comfort long, and lose thy love thereby!
But love me for love's sake, that evermore
Thou mayst love on, through love's eternity.

XXII

When our two souls stand up erect and strong,
Face to face, silent, drawing nigh and nigher,
Until the lengthening wings break into fire
At either curvéd point—what bitter wrong
Can the earth do to us, that we should not long 5
Be here contented? Think. In mounting higher,
The angels would press on us and aspire
To drop some golden orb of perfect song
Into our deep, dear silence. Let us stay
Rather on earth, Beloved—where the unfit 10

Sonnet III. 12. **cypress tree**, symbolic of mourning and death. 13. **chrism**, baptismal oil of consecration.

Contrarious moods of men recoil away
And isolate pure spirits, and permit
A place to stand and love in for a day,
With darkness and the death-hour rounding it.

XLIII

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of every day's 5
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith. 10
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints—I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life!—and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

(1850)

GEORGE ELIOT (1819-1880)

O MAY I JOIN THE CHOIR INVISIBLE

*Longum illud tempus, quum non ero, magis me movet, quam hoc exiguum.—*Cicero, Ad Att.*, xii. 18.

O may I join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence; live
In pulses stirred to generosity,
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn 5
For miserable aims that end with self,
In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,
And with their mild persistence urge man's search
To vaster issues.
So to live is heaven:
To make undying music in the world, 10
Breathing as beauteous order that controls
With growing sway the growing life of man.
So we inherit that sweet purity
For which we struggled, failed, and agonized
With widening retrospect that bred despair. 15
Rebellious flesh that would not be subdued,
A vicious parent shaming still its child,
Poor anxious penitence, is quick dissolved;
Its discords, quenched by meeting harmonies,
Die in the large and charitable air. 20
And all our rarer, better, truer self,
That sobbed religiously in yearning song,
That watched to ease the burthen of the world,
Laboriously tracing what must be,
And what may yet be better—saw within 25
A worthier image for the sanctuary,
And shaped it forth before the multitude,
Divinely human, raising worship so
To higher reverence more mixed with love—
That better self shall live till human Time 30
Shall fold its eyelids, and the human sky
Be gathered like a scroll within the tomb
Unread forever.
This is life to come,
Which martyred men have made more glorious
For us who strive to follow. May I reach 35
That purest heaven, be to other souls
The cup of strength in some great agony,
Enkindle generous ardor, feed pure love,
Beget the smiles that have no cruelty,
Be the sweet presence of a good diffused,
And in diffusion evermore intense! 41
So shall I join the choir invisible
Whose music is the gladness of the world.

(1867)

*That long time, when I shall not be, moves me more than this short time. (Letters to Atticus, XII, 18).

*ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON (1809-1892)

THE POET

The poet in a golden clime was born,
With golden stars above;
Dowered with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,
The love of love.

He saw through life and death, through good and ill, 5
He saw through his own soul.
The marvel of the everlasting will,
An open scroll,

Before him lay; with echoing feet he threaded
The secretest walks of fame. 10
The viewless arrows of his thoughts were headed
And winged with flame,

Like Indian reeds blown from his silver tongue,
And of so fierce a flight,
From Calpe unto Caucasus they sung, 15
Filling with light

And vagrant melodies the winds which bore
Them earthward till they lit;
Then, like the arrow-seeds of the field flower,
The fruitful wit 20

Cleaving took root, and springing forth anew
Where'er they fell, behold,
Like to the mother plant in semblance, grew
A flower all gold,

And bravely furnished all abroad to fling 25
The wingéd shafts of truth,
To throng with stately blooms the breathing spring
Of Hope and Youth.

So many minds did gird their orbs with beams,
Though one did fling the fire; 30
Heaven flowed upon the soul in many dreams
Of high desire.

Thus truth was multiplied on truth, the world
Like one great garden showed,
And through the wreaths of floating dark upcurled, 35
Rare sunrise flowed.

And Freedom reared in that august sunrise
Her beautiful bold brow,
When rites and forms before his burning eyes
Melted like snow. 40

There was no blood upon her maiden robes
Sunned by those orient skies;
But round about the circles of the globes
Of her keen eyes

And in her raiment's hem was traced in flame 45
Wisdom, a name to shake
All evil dreams of power—a sacred name.
And when she spake,

Her words did gather thunder as they ran,
And as the lightning to the thunder 50
Which follows it, riving the spirit of man,
Making earth wonder,

So was their meaning to her words. No sword
Of wrath her right arm whirled,
But one poor poet's scroll, and with *his* word 55
She shook the world.

(1830)

*The poet laureate of the Victorian Age, whose verse is extremely musical, idealistic, and rather melancholy. He drew his inspiration both from classical and medieval traditions and from contemporary life. He was repelled by what he regarded as the lack of idealism of his age. See headnote on page 193.

The Poet. 13. **reeds**, pipes. 15. **Calpe**, a Phoenician colony near Gibraltar. **Caucasus**, a mountain range between the Black and the Caspian Seas.

ŒNONE

There lies a vale in Ida, lovelier
Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.
The swimming vapor slopes athwart the glen,
Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to pine,
And loiters, slowly drawn. On either hand 5
The lawns and meadow-ledges midway down
Hang rich in flowers, and far below them roars
The long brook falling through the cloven ravine
In cataract after cataract to the sea.
Behind the valley topmost Gargarus 10
Stands up and takes the morning; but in front
The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal
Troas, and Ilion's columned citadel,
The crown of Troas.
Hither came at noon
Mournful Œnone, wandering forlorn 15
Of Paris, once her playmate on the hills.
Her cheek had lost the rose, and round her neck
Floated her hair or seemed to float in rest.
She, leaning on a fragment twined with vine,
Sang to the stillness till the mountain-shade 20
Sloped downward to her seat from the upper cliff.

"O mother Ida, many-fountained Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
For now the noonday quiet holds the hill;
The grasshopper is silent in the grass; 25
The lizard, with his shadow on the stone,
Rests like a shadow, and the winds are dead.
The purple flower droops, the golden bee
Is lily-cradled; I alone awake.
My eyes are full of tears, my heart of love, 30
My heart is breaking, and my eyes are dim,
And I am all aweary of my life.

"O mother Ida, many-fountained Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Hear me, O earth, hear me, O hills, O caves 35
That house the cold-crowned snake! O mountain brooks,
I am the daughter of a river god,
Hear me, for I will speak, and build up all
My sorrow with my song, as yonder walls
Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed,
A cloud that gathered shape; for it may be 41
That, while I speak of it, a little while
My heart may wander from its deeper woe.

"O mother Ida, many-fountained Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die. 45
I waited underneath the dawning hills;
Aloft the mountain-lawn was dewy-dark,
And dewy-dark aloft the mountain-pine.
Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,
Leading a jet-black goat white-horned, white-hoofed, 50
Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

"O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Far off the torrent called me from the cleft;
Far up the solitary morning smote
The streaks of virgin snow. With down-dropped eyes 55
I sat alone; white-breasted like a star
Fronting the dawn he moved; a leopard skin
Drooped from his shoulder, but his sunny hair
Clustered about his temples like a god's;
And his cheek brightened as the foam-bow brightens 60
When the wind blows the foam, and all my heart
Went forth to embrace him coming ere he came.

Œnone. Œnone was a nymph whom Paris loved before he awarded to Aphrodite the golden apple of Discord inscribed "To the fairest." Œnone's appeal is made to Mount Ida, near Troy. 2. **Ionian**, the central coast section of western Asia Minor. 10. **Gargarus**, the topmost crag of Mt. Ida. 13. **Ilion**, Troy. 14. **Troas**, the Trojan Peninsula.

39. **yonder walls.** According to the myth, the walls of Troy rose into place at the sound of Poseidon's pipes. 51. **Simois**, a river of the Trojan plain.

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
He smiled, and opening out his milk-white palm
Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian gold,
That smelt ambrosially, and while I looked 66
And listened, the full-flowing river of speech
Came down upon my heart:
'My own Œnone,
Beautiful-browed Œnone, my own soul,
Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind ingraven 70
"For the most fair," would seem to award it thine,
As lovelier than whatever Oread haunt
The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace
Of movement, and the charm of married brows.'

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
He pressed the blossom of his lips to mine, 76
And added, 'This was cast upon the board,
When all the full-faced presence of the gods
Ranged in the halls of Peleus; whereupon
Rose feud, with question unto whom 'twere due; 80
But light-foot Iris brought it yestereve,
Delivering, that to me, by common voice
Elected umpire, Heré comes today,
Pallas and Aphrodite, claiming each
This meed of fairest. Thou, within the cave 85
Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest pine,
Mayst well behold them unbeheld, unheard
Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of gods.'

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
It was the deep midnoon; one silvery cloud 90
Had lost his way between the piny sides
Of this long glen. Then to the bower they came,
Naked they came to that smooth-swarded bower,
And at their feet the crocus brake like fire,
Violet, amaracus, and asphodel, 95
Lotos and lilies; and a wind arose,
And overhead the wandering ivy and vine,
This way and that, in many a wild festoon
Ran riot, garlanding the gnarléd boughs
With bunch and berry and flower through and through. 100

"O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,
And o'er him flowed a golden cloud, and leaned
Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew.
Then first I heard the voice of her to whom 105
Coming through heaven, like a light that grows
Larger and clearer, with one mind the gods
Rise up for reverence. She to Paris made
Proffer of royal power, ample rule
Unquestioned, overflowing revenue 110
Wherewith to embellish state, 'From many a vale
And river-sundered champaign clothed with corn,
Or labored mine undrainable of ore.
Honor,' she said, 'and homage, tax and toll,
From many an inland town and haven large, 115
Mast-thronged beneath her shadowing citadel
In glassy bays among her tallest towers.'

"O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Still she spake on and still she spake of power,
'Which in all action is the end of all; 120
Power fitted to the season; wisdom-bred
And throned of wisdom—from all neighbor crowns

72. **Oread,** a mountain nymph. 79. **Peleus.** At his marriage with Thetis, Eris (discord) threw among the goddesses an apple inscribed "To the fairest." Aphrodite (love), Pallas Athena (wisdom), and Hera (regal power), claimed it, and made Paris their judge. For awarding the apple to Aphrodite he received Helen, queen of Sparta, as his paramour.

Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand
Fail from the scepter-staff. Such boon from me,
From me, heaven's queen, Paris, to thee king-born, 125
A shepherd all thy life but yet king-born,
Should come most welcome, seeing men, in power
Only, are likest gods, who have attained
Rest in a happy place and quiet seats
Above the thunder, with undying bliss
In knowledge of their own supremacy.' 131

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
She ceased, and Paris held the costly fruit
Out at arm's length, so much the thought of power
Flattered his spirit; but Pallas where she stood 135
Somewhat apart, her clear and bared limbs
O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed spear
Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,
The while, above, her full and earnest eye
Over her snow-cold breast and angry cheek 140
Kept watch, waiting decision, made reply:
'Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
These three alone lead life to sovereign power.
Yet not for power (power of herself
Would come uncalled for) but to live by law, 145
Acting the law we live by without fear;
And, because right is right, to follow right
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence.'

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Again she said: 'I woo thee not with gifts. 150
Sequel of guerdon could not alter me
To fairer. Judge thou me by what I am,
So shalt thou find me fairest.
Yet, indeed,
If gazing on divinity disrobed
Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of fair, 155
Unbiased by self-profit, Oh, rest thee sure
That I shall love thee well and cleave to thee,
So that my vigor, wedded to thy blood,
Shall strike within thy pulses, like a god's,
To push thee forward through a life of shocks, 160
Dangers, and deeds, until endurance grow
Sinewed with action, and the full-grown will,
Circled through all experiences, pure law,
Commeasure perfect freedom.'
"Here she ceased,
And Paris pondered, and I cried, 'O Paris, 165
Give it to Pallas!' but he heard me not,
Or hearing would not hear me, woe is me!

"O mother Ida, many-fountained Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Idalian Aphrodite beautiful, 170
Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian wells,
With rosy slender fingers backward drew
From her warm brows and bosom her deep hair
Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat
And shoulder; from the violets her light foot 175
Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded form
Between the shadows of the vine-bunches
Floated the glowing sunlights, as she moved.

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
She with a subtle smile in her mild eyes,
The herald of her triumph, drawing nigh 181
Half-whispered in his ear, 'I promise thee

171. **Paphian.** A shrine of Aphrodite was at Paphos, on the Island of Cyprus.

The fairest and most loving wife in Greece.'
She spoke and laughed; I shut my sight for fear;
But when I looked, Paris had raised his arm, 185
And I beheld great Heré's angry eyes,
As she withdrew into the golden cloud,
And I was left alone within the bower;
And from that time to this I am alone,
And I shall be alone until I die. 190

"Yet, mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Fairest—why fairest wife? Am I not fair?
My love hath told me so a thousand times.
Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,
When I passed by, a wild and wanton pard, 195
Eyed like the evening star, with playful tail
Crouched fawning in the weed. Most loving is she?
Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that my arms
Were wound about thee, and my hot lips pressed
Close, close to thine in that quick-falling dew 200
Of fruitful kisses, thick as autumn rains
Flash in the pools of whirling Simois!

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
They came, they cut away my tallest pines,
My tall dark pines, that plumed the craggy ledge 205
High over the blue gorge, and all between
The snowy peak and snow-white cataract
Fostered the callow eaglet—from beneath
Whose thick mysterious boughs in the dark morn
The panther's roar came muffled, while I sat 210
Low in the valley. Never, never more
Shall lone Œnone see the morning mist
Sweep through them; never see them overlaid
With narrow moonlit slips of silver cloud,
Between the loud stream and the trembling stars. 215

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I wish that somewhere in the ruined folds,
Among the fragments tumbled from the glens,
Or the dry thickets, I could meet with her 220
The Abominable, that uninvited came
Into the fair Peleïan banquet-hall,
And cast the golden fruit upon the board,
And bred this change; that I might speak my mind,
And tell her to her face how much I hate
Her presence, hated both of gods and men. 225

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hath he not sworn his love a thousand times,
In this green valley, under this green hill,
Even on this hand, and sitting on this stone?
Sealed it with kisses? watered it with tears? 230
O happy tears, and how unlike to these!
O happy heaven, how canst thou see my face?
O happy earth, how canst thou bear my weight?
O death, death, death, thou ever-floating cloud,
There are enough unhappy on this earth, 235
Pass by the happy souls, that love to live;
I pray thee, pass before my light of life,
And shadow all my soul, that I may die.
Thou weighest heavy on the heart within,
Weigh heavy on my eyelids; let me die. 240

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts
Do shape themselves within me, more and more,

195. **wanton pard**, frolicsome leopard.

Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear
Dead sounds at night come from the inmost hills, 245
Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see
My far-off doubtful purpose, as a mother
Conjectures of the features of her child
Ere it is born. Her child!—a shudder comes
Across me; never child be born of me, 250
Unblest, to vex me with his father's eyes!

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,
Lest their shrill happy laughter come to me
Walking the cold and starless road of death 255
Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love
With the Greek woman. I will rise and go
Down into Troy, and ere the stars come forth
Talk with the wild Cassandra, for she says
A fire dances before her, and a sound 260
Rings ever in her ears of arméd men.
What this may be I know not, but I know
That wheresoe'er I am by night and day,
All earth and air seem only burning fire." (1842)

THE LOTOS-EATERS

"Courage!" he said, and pointed toward the land,
"This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon."
In the afternoon they came unto a land
In which it seeméd always afternoon.
All round the coast the languid air did swoon, 5
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.
Full-faced above the valley stood the moon;
And, like a downward smoke, the slender stream
Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A land of streams! some, like a downward smoke, 10
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;
And some through wavering lights and shadows broke,
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow
From the inner land; far off, three mountain-tops, 15
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
Stood sunset-flushed; and, dewed with showery drops,
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

The charméd sunset lingered low adown
In the red west; through mountain clefts the dale 20
Was seen far inland, and the yellow down
Bordered with palm, and many a winding vale
And meadow, set with slender galingale;
A land where all things always seemed the same!
And round about the keel with faces pale, 25
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave
To each, but whoso did receive of them
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave 31
Far, far away did seem to mourn and rave

259. **Cassandra**, daughter of King Priam, and vainly beloved of Apollo, who gave her the power of prophecy, but with it the provision that no one should believe her.

The Lotos-Eaters. The lotus, when eaten, was supposed by the ancients to cause forgetfulness. The land of the Lotus-Eaters was visited by Ulysses during his wanderings from Troy. The Choric Song should be compared with "The Garden of Proserpine" (page 595).

21. **down**, upland meadow. 23. **galingale**, an aromatic sedge.

On alien shores; and if his fellow spake,
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave;
And deep-asleep he seemed, yet all awake, 35
And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,
Between the sun and moon upon the shore;
And sweet it was to dream of fatherland,
Of child, and wife and slave; but evermore 40
Most weary seemed the sea, weary the oar,
Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.
Then someone said, "We will return no more";
And all at once they sang, "Our island home
Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer roam." 45

CHORIC SONG

I

There is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies, 50
Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies.
Here are cool mosses deep,
And through the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep, 55
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

II

Why are we weighed upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
While all things else have rest from weariness?
All things have rest; why should we toil alone, 60
We only toil, who are the first of things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown;
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings, 65
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm;
Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,
"There is no joy but calm!"—
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things?

III

Lo! in the middle of the wood, 70
The folded leaf is wooed from out the bud
With winds upon the branch, and there
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,
Sun-steeped at noon, and in the moon
Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow 75
Falls, and floats adown the air.
Lo! sweetened with the summer light,
The full-juiced apple, waxing overmellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night.
All its allotted length of days 80
The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

IV

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea. 85
Death is the end of life; ah, why
Should life all labor be?
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb.
Let us alone. What is it that will last? 90
All things are taken from us, and become
Portions and parcels of the dreadful past.
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have

To war with evil? Is there any peace
In ever climbing up the climbing wave? 95
All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave
In silence—ripen, fall, and cease.
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease.

V

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
With half-shut eyes ever to seem 100
Falling asleep in a half-dream!
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height;
To hear each other's whispered speech;
Eating the Lotos day by day, 105
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
And tender curving lines of creamy spray;
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;
To muse and brood and live again in memory, 110
With those old faces of our infancy
Heaped over with a mound of grass,
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass!

VI

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
And dear the last embraces of our wives 115
And their warm tears; but all hath suffered change;
For surely now our household hearths are cold,
Our sons inherit us, our looks are strange,
And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.
Or else the island princes over-bold 120
Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings
Before them of the ten years' war in Troy,
And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.
Is there confusion in the little isle?
Let what is broken so remain. 125
The gods are hard to reconcile;
'Tis hard to settle order once again.
There *is* confusion worse than death,
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
Long labor unto aged breath, 130
Sore task to hearts worn out by many wars
And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.

VII

But, propped on beds of amaranth and moly,
How sweet—while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly—
With half-dropped eyelid still, 135
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
To watch the long bright river drawing slowly
His waters from the purple hill—
To hear the dewy echoes calling
From cave to cave through the thick-twined vine— 140
To watch the emerald-colored water falling
Through many a woven acanthus-wreath divine!
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,
Only to hear were sweet, stretched out beneath the pine.

VIII

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak, 145
The Lotos blows by every winding creek;
All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone;
Through every hollow cave and alley lone
Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-dust is blown.

132. **pilot-stars**, stars by which ships were steered; especially the North Star. 133. **amaranth**, a flower of the Elysian Fields. **moly**, a herb mentioned in the *Odyssey*.

We have had enough of action, and of motion we, 150
Rolled to starboard, rolled to larboard, when the surge was seething free,
Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-fountains in the sea.
Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined
On the hills like gods together, careless of mankind. 155
For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are hurled
Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are lightly curled
Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming world;
Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps and fiery sands, 160
Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships, and praying hands.
But they smile, they find a music centered in a doleful song
Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of wrong,
Like a tale of little meaning though the words are strong;
Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the soil, 165
Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring toil,
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and oil;
Till they perish and they suffer—some, 'tis whispered—down in hell
Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys dwell,
Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel. 170
Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the shore
Than labor in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave and oar;
Oh, rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more.

(1842)

170. **asphodel**, a flower of the Elysian Fields.

SAINT AGNES' EVE

Deep on the convent-roof the snows
Are sparkling to the moon;
My breath to heaven like vapor goes;
May my soul follow soon!
The shadows of the convent-towers 5
Slant down the snowy sward,
Still creeping with the creeping hours
That lead me to my Lord.
Make Thou my spirit pure and clear
As are the frosty skies, 10
Or this first snowdrop of the year
That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soiled and dark,
To yonder shining ground;
As this pale taper's earthly spark, 15
To yonder argent round;
So shows my soul before the Lamb,
My spirit before Thee;
So in mine earthly house I am,
To that I hope to be. 20
Break up the heavens, O Lord! and far,
Through all yon starlight keen.
Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,
In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors; 25
The flashes come and go;
All heaven burst her starry floors,
And strows her lights below,
And deepens on and up! the gates
Roll back, and far within 30
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,
To make me pure of sin.
The Sabbaths of Eternity,
One Sabbath deep and wide—
A light upon the shining sea— 35
The Bridegroom with his bride!

(1837)

OF OLD SAT FREEDOM ON THE HEIGHTS

Of old sat Freedom on the heights,
The thunders breaking at her feet;
Above her shook the starry lights;
She heard the torrents meet.

St. Agnes' Eve. A mystic poem about a nun who aspires on the Eve of St. Agnes to be translated to heaven, where Christ, the Heavenly Bridegroom of the Revelation of St. John, prepares to marry the church, his bride, and purify her from sin.

Of Old Sat Freedom on the Heights. A patriotic ode like those of Horace.

There in her place she did rejoice, 5
Self-gathered in her prophet-mind,
But fragments of her mighty voice
Came rolling on the wind.

Then stepped she down through town and field
To mingle with the human race, 10
And part by part to men revealed
The fullness of her face—

Grave mother of majestic works,
From her isle-altar gazing down,
Who, Godlike, grasps the triple forks 15
And, king-like, wears the crown.

Her open eyes desire the truth.
The wisdom of a thousand years
Is in them. May perpetual youth
Keep dry their light from tears; 20

That her fair form may stand and shine,
Make bright our days and light our dreams,
Turning to scorn with lips divine
The falsehood of extremes! (1842)

ULYSSES

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Matched with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me. 5
I cannot rest from travel. I will drink
Life to the lees. All times I have enjoyed
Greatly, have suffered greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when
Through scudding drifts the rainy Hyades 10
Vexed the dim sea. I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known; cities of men,
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honored of them all; 15
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met.
Yet all experience is an arch wherethrough
Gleams that untraveled world, whose margin fades 20
Forever and forever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnished, not to shine in use!
As though to breathe were life. Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me 25
Little remains. But every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself, 29
And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.
This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the scepter and the isle—
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfill 35
This labor, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and through soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centered in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail 40
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.
There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail;
There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners, 45
Souls that have toiled, and wrought, and thought with me—
That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed

15. **triple forks.** Britannia symbolizes her control of the sea by carrying the trident of Neptune.

Ulysses. The last voyage of Ulysses. Once, when he asked the ghost of Tiresias, the seer, whence should come his own death, the seer answered that a peaceful death would come to him from the sea. 10. **Hyades,** a constellation supposed to bring rain.

Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old;
Old age hath yet his honor and his toil;
Death closes all. But something ere the end, 51
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks;
The long day wanes; the slow moon climbs; the deep 55
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die. 61
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Though much is taken, much abides; and though 65
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield. (1842)

THE POET'S SONG

The rain had fallen, the Poet arose,
He passed by the town and out of the street;
A light wind blew from the gates of the sun,
And waves of shadow went over the wheat;
And he sat him down in a lonely place, 5
And chanted a melody loud and sweet,
That made the wild-swan pause in her cloud,
And the lark drop down at his feet.

The swallow stopped as he hunted the fly,
The snake slipped under a spray, 10
The wild hawk stood with the down on his beak,
And stared, with his foot on the prey;
And the nightingale thought, "I have sung many songs,
But never a one so gay,
For he sings of what the world will be 15
When the years have died away."
(1842)

63. **Happy Isles**, the Greek Islands of the Blessed.

LYRICS FROM THE PRINCESS

AS THROUGH THE LAND AT EVE WE WENT

As through the land at eve we went,
And plucked the ripened ears,
We fell out, my wife and I,
Oh, we fell out, I know not why,
And kissed again with tears. 5
And blessings on the falling out
That all the more endears,
When we fall out with those we love
And kiss again with tears!
For when we came where lies the child
We lost in other years, 11
There above the little grave,
Oh, there above the little grave,
We kissed again with tears.

THE SPLENDOR FALLS ON CASTLE WALLS

The splendor falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story;
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying, 5
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

Oh, hark, oh, hear! how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going!
Oh, sweet and far from cliff and scar
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!

Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying, 11
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river;
Our echoes roll from soul to soul, 15
And grow forever and forever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

TEARS, IDLE TEARS

Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more. 5

Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the underworld,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more. 10

Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awakened birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more. 15

Dear as remembered kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feigned
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more. 20

THY VOICE IS HEARD

Thy voice is heard through rolling drums
That beat to battle where he stands;
Thy face across his fancy comes,
And gives the battle to his hands.
A moment, while the trumpets blow, 5
He sees his brood about thy knee;
The next, like fire he meets the foe,
And strikes him dead for thine and thee.

ASK ME NO MORE

Ask me no more. The moon may draw the sea;
The cloud may stoop from heaven and take the shape,
With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape;
But O too fond, when have I answered thee?
Ask me no more. 5

Ask me no more. What answer should I give?
I love not hollow cheek or faded eye;
Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee die!
Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live;
Ask me no more. 10

Ask me no more. Thy fate and mine are sealed;
I strove against the stream and all in vain;
Let the great river take me to the main.
No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield;
Ask me no more.

NOW SLEEPS THE CRIMSON PETAL

Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white;
Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk;
Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font.
The firefly wakens. Waken thou with me.

Now droops the milk-white peacock like a ghost, 5
And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the stars,
And all thy heart lies open unto me.

Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves 9
A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me.

Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,
And slips into the bosom of the lake;
So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip
Into my bosom and be lost in me.

COME DOWN, O MAID

Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height.
What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd sang),
In height and cold, the splendor of the hills?
But cease to move so near the heavens, and cease
To glide a sunbeam by the blasted pine, 5
To sit a star upon the sparkling spire;
And come, for Love is of the valley, come,
For Love is of the valley, come thou down
And find him; by the happy threshold, he,
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize, 10
Or red with spirted purple of the vats,
Or foxlike in the vine; nor cares to walk
With Death and Morning on the silver horns,
Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,
Nor find him dropped upon the firths of ice, 15
That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls
To roll the torrent out of dusky doors.
But follow; let the torrent dance thee down
To find him in the valley; let the wild
Lean-headed eagles yelp alone, and leave 20
The monstrous ledges there to slope, and spill
Their thousands wreaths of dangling water-smoke,
That like a broken purpose waste in air.
So waste not thou; but come; for all the vales
Await thee; azure pillars of the hearth 25
Arise to thee; the children call, and I
Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every sound,
Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet;
Myriads of rivulets hurrying through the lawn,
The moan of doves in immemorial elms, 30
And murmuring of innumerable bees.

(1850)

Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal. 7. **Danaë**, a paramour of Jupiter, to whom he came as a shower of gold.
Come Down, O Maid. A poem written in the manner of a Greek pastoral. 15. **firth**, a narrow arm of the sea.

FROM IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII

PROEM

Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade; 5
Thou madest life in man and brute;
Thou madest death; and lo, thy foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust: 9
Thou madest man, he knows not why,
He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him; thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood, thou.

In Memoriam. Written in memory of Tennyson's dearest friend, Arthur Henry Hallam, who died in Vienna, September 15, 1833. It is an embodiment of Victorian idealism, which was already waning in the new age of industry and science.

Our wills are ours, we know not how; 15
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be;
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they. 20

We have but faith; we cannot know,
For knowledge is of things we see;
And yet we trust it comes from thee,
A beam in darkness; let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell; 26
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight;
We mock thee when we do not fear. 30
But help thy foolish ones to bear;
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seemed my sin in me,
What seemed my worth since I began;
For merit lives from man to man, 35
And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,
Thy creature, whom I found so fair.
I trust he lives in thee, and there
I find him worthier to be loved. 40

Forgive these wild and wandering cries,
Confusions of a wasted youth;
Forgive them where they fail in truth,
And in thy wisdom make me wise.

I

I held it truth, with him who sings
To one clear harp in divers tones,
That men may rise on stepping-stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years 5
And find in loss a gain to match?
Or reach a hand through time to catch
The far-off interest of tears?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drowned;
Let darkness keep her raven gloss. 10

Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,
To dance with Death, to beat the ground,

Than that the victor Hours should scorn
The long result of love, and boast,
"Behold the man that loved and lost,
But all he was is overworn." 16

IX

Fair ship, that from the Italian shore
Sailest the placid ocean-plains
With my lost Arthur's loved remains,
Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er.

So draw him home to those that mourn 5
In vain; a favorable speed
Ruffle thy mirrored mast, and lead
Through prosperous floods his holy urn.

All night no ruder air perplex
Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor, bright
As our pure love, through early light
Shall glimmer on the dewy decks. 12

Sphere all your lights around, above;
Sleep, gentle heavens, before the prow;
Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now,
My friend, the brother of my love; 16

My Arthur, whom I shall not see
Till all my widowed race be run;
Dear as the mother to the son,
More than my brothers are to me. 20

X

I hear the noise about thy keel;
I hear the bell struck in the night;
I see the cabin-window bright;
I see the sailor at the wheel.

Thou bring'st the sailor to his wife, 5
And traveled men from foreign lands;
And letters unto trembling hands;
And, thy dark freight, a vanished life.

So bring him; we have idle dreams;
This look of quiet flatters thus 10
Our home-bred fancies, O to us,
The fools of habit, sweeter seems

IX. 1. **Fair ship,** an allusion to the ship which carried the body of Hallam to England. 10. **Phosphor,** the morning star.

To rest beneath the clover sod,
That takes the sunshine and the rains,
Or where the kneeling hamlet drains
The chalice of the grapes of God, 16

Than if with thee the roaring wells
Should gulf him fathom-deep in brine;
And hands so often clasped in mine,
Should toss with tangle and with shells. 20

XI

Calm is the morn without a sound,
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,
And only through the faded leaf
The chestnut pattering to the ground;

Calm and deep peace on this high wold, 5
And on these dews that drench the furze,
And all the silvery gossamers
That twinkle into green and gold;

Calm and still light on yon great plain
That sweeps with all its autumn bowers, 10
And crowded farms and lessening towers,
To mingle with the bounding main.

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,
These leaves that redden to the fall;
And in my heart, if calm at all, 15
If any calm, a calm despair.

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,
And waves that sway themselves in rest,
And dead calm in that noble breast
Which heaves but with the heaving deep. 20

XII

Lo, as a dove when up she springs
To bear through heaven a tale of woe,
Some dolorous message knit below
The wild pulsation of her wings;

Like her I go; I cannot stay; 5
I leave this mortal ark behind,
A weight of nerves without a mind,
And leave the cliffs, and haste away

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,
And reach the glow of southern skies,
And see the sails at distance rise, 11
And linger weeping on the marge,

And saying: "Comes he thus, my friend?
Is this the end of all my care?"
And circle moaning in the air: 15
"Is this the end? Is this the end?"

And forward dart again, and play
About the prow, and back return
To where the body sits, and learn
That I have been an hour away. 20

XLIV

How fares it with the happy dead?
For here the man is more and more;
But he forgets the days before
God shut the doorways of his head.

The days have vanished, tone and tint, 5
And yet perhaps the hoarding sense
Gives out at times (he knows not whence)
A little flash, a mystic hint;

And in the long harmonious years
(If Death so taste Lethean springs), 10
May some dim touch of earthly things
Surprise thee ranging with thy peers.

If such a dreamy touch should fall,
O turn thee round, resolve the doubt;
My guardian angel will speak out, 15
In that high place, and tell thee all.

XLV

The baby new to earth and sky,
What time his tender palm is prest
Against the circle of the breast,
Has never thought that "this is I":

But as he grows he gathers much, 5
And learns the use of "I," and "me,"
And finds "I am not what I see,
And other than the things I touch."

So rounds he to a separate mind
From whence clear memory may begin, 10

XLIV. 10. **Lethean.** Whoever drank from the River Lethe in the Grecian Hades forgot all the past.

As through the frame that binds him in
His isolation grows defined.

This use may lie in blood and breath,
Which else were fruitless of their due,
Had man to learn himself anew 15
Beyond the second birth of Death.

XLVI

We ranging down this lower track,
The path we came by, thorn and flower,
Is shadowed by the growing hour,
Lest life should fail in looking back.

So be it. There no shade can last 5
In that deep dawn behind the tomb,
But clear from marge to marge shall bloom
The eternal landscape of the past;

A lifelong tract of time revealed;
The fruitful hours of still increase; 10
Days ordered in a wealthy peace,
And those five years its richest field.

O love, thy province were not large,
A bounded field, nor stretching far;
Look also, Love, a brooding star, 15
A rosy warmth from marge to marge.

XLVII

That each, who seems a separate whole,
Should move his rounds, and fusing all
The skirts of self again, should fall
Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet 5
Eternal form shall still divide
The eternal soul from all beside;
And I shall know him when we meet:

And we shall sit at endless feast,
Enjoying each the other's good. 10
What vaster dream can hit the mood
Of Love on earth? He seeks at least

Upon the last and sharpest height,
Before the spirits fade away, 14
Some landing-place, to clasp and say,
"Farewell! We lose ourselves in light."

XLVIII

If these brief lays, of Sorrow born,
Were taken to be such as closed
Grave doubts and answers here proposed,
Then these were such as men might scorn.

Her care is not to part and prove; 5
She takes, when harsher moods remit,
What slender shade of doubt may flit,
And makes it vassal unto love.

And hence, indeed, she sports with words,
But better serves a wholesome law, 10
And holds it sin and shame to draw
The deepest measure from the chords.

Nor dare she trust a larger lay,
But rather loosens from the lip
Short swallow-flights of song, that dip 15
Their wings in tears, and skim away.

XLIX

From art, from nature, from the schools,
Let random influences glance,
Like light in many a shivered lance
That breaks about the dappled pools.

The lightest wave of thought shall lisp,
The fancy's tenderest eddy wreathe, 6
The slightest air of song shall breathe
To make the sullen surface crisp.

And look thy look, and go thy way,
But blame not thou the winds that make 10
The seeming-wanton ripple break,
The tender-penciled shadow play.

Beneath all fancied hopes and fears
Aye me, the sorrow deepens down,
Whose muffled motions blindly drown
The bases of my life in tears. 16

L

Be near me when my light is low,
When the blood creeps, and the nerves prick

And tingle; and the heart is sick,
And all the wheels of Being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame 5
Is racked with pangs that conquer trust;
And Time, a maniac scattering dust,
And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,
And men the flies of latter spring, 10
That lay their eggs, and sting and sing
And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,
To point the term of human strife,
And on the low dark verge of life 15
The twilight of eternal day.

LI

Do we indeed desire the dead
Should still be near us at our side?
Is there no baseness we would hide?
No inner vileness that we dread?

Shall he for whose applause I strove, 5
I had such reverence for his blame,
See with clear eye some hidden shame
And I be lessened in his love?

I wrong the grave with fears untrue
Shall love be blamed for want of faith? 10
There must be wisdom with great Death;
The dead shall look me through and through.

Be near us when we climb or fall.
Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours
With larger other eyes than ours, 15
To make allowance for us all.

LII

I cannot love thee as I ought,
For love reflects the thing beloved;
My words are only words, and moved
Upon the topmost froth of thought.

"Yet blame not thou thy plaintive song," 5
The spirit of true love replied;
"Thou canst not move me from thy side,
Nor human frailty do me wrong.

"What keeps a spirit wholly true
To that ideal which he bears? 10
What record? Not the sinless years
That breathed beneath the Syrian blue.

"So fret not, like an idle girl,
That life is dashed with flecks of sin.
Abide; thy wealth is gathered in, 15
When Time hath sundered shell from pearl."

LIII

How many a father have I seen,
A sober man, among his boys,
Whose youth was full of foolish noise,
Who wears his manhood hale and green.

And dare we to this fancy give, 5
That had the wild oat not been sown,
The soil, left barren, scarce had grown
The grain by which a man may live?

Or, if we held the doctrine sound
For life outliving heats of youth, 10
Yet who would preach it as a truth
To those that eddy round and round?

Hold thou the good; define it well;
For fear divine Philosophy
Should push beyond her mark, and be 15
Procuress to the Lords of Hell.

LIV

O yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet; 5
That not one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete;

LII. 11-12. **sinless years . . . Syrian blue,** etc., alluding to Christ.

That not a worm is cloven in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire 10
Is shriveled in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last, to all, 15
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream. But what am I?
An infant crying in the night;
An infant crying for the light;
And with no language but a cry. 20

LV

The wish, that of the living whole
No life may fail beyond the grave,
Derives it not from what we have
The likest God within the soul?

Are God and Nature then at strife, 5
That Nature lends such evil dreams?
So careful of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life,

That I, considering everywhere
Her secret meaning in her deeds, 10
And finding that of fifty seeds
She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,
And falling with my weight of cares
Upon the great world's altar-stairs 15
That slope through darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope. 20

LVI

"So careful of the type?" but no.
From scarpéd cliff and quarried stone
She cries, "A thousand types are gone.
I care for nothing, all shall go.

"Thou makest thine appeal to me; 5
I bring to life, I bring to death;
The spirit does but mean the breath.
I know no more." And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seemed so fair,
Such splendid purpose in his eyes, 10
Who rolled the psalm to wintry skies,
Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed
And love Creation's final law—
Though Nature, red in tooth and claw
With ravine, shrieked against his creed— 16

Who loved, who suffered countless ills,
Who battled for the True, the Just,
Be blown about the desert dust,
Or sealed within the iron hills? 20

No more? A monster then, a dream,
A discord. Dragons of the prime,
That tare each other in their slime,
Were mellow music matched with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail! 25
O for thy voice to soothe and bless!
What hope of answer, or redress?
Behind the veil, behind the veil.

CVI

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light;
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new, 5
Ring, happy bells, across the snow;
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor; 11
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life, 15
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rimes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in. 20

LVI. 22. **prime**, primeval age.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
  The civic slander and the spite;
  Ring in the love of truth and right;
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease; 25
  Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
  Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
  The larger heart, the kindlier hand; 30
  Ring out the darkness of the land.
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

CXIV

Who loves not Knowledge? Who shall rail
  Against her beauty? May she mix
  With men and prosper! Who shall fix
Her pillars? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire; 5
  She sets her forward countenance
  And leaps into the future chance,
Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain—
  She cannot fight the fear of death. 10
  What is she, cut from love and faith,
But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of demons? fiery-hot to burst
  All barriers in her onward race
  For power. Let her know her place;
She is the second, not the first. 16

A higher hand must make her mild,
  If all be not in vain, and guide
  Her footsteps, moving side by side
With Wisdom, like the younger child; 20

For she is earthly of the mind,
  But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.
  O friend, who camest to thy goal
So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like thee,
  Who grewest not alone in power 26
  And knowledge, but by year and hour
In reverence and in charity.

CXIV. 12. **Pallas.** Athena sprang full grown from the head of Zeus.

CXXV

Whatever I have said or sung,
  Some bitter notes my harp would give,
  Yea, though there often seemed to live
A contradiction on the tongue,

Yet Hope had never lost her youth; 5
  She did but look through dimmer eyes;
  Or Love but played with gracious lies,
Because he felt so fixed in truth.

And if the song were full of care,
  He breathed the spirit of the song; 10
  And if the words were sweet and strong
He set his royal signet there;

Abiding with me till I sail
  To seek thee on the mystic deeps,
  And this electric force, that keeps 15
A thousand pulses dancing, fail.

CXXVI

Love is and was my lord and king,
  And in his presence I attend
  To hear the tidings of my friend,
Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my king and lord, 5
  And will be, though as yet I keep
  Within his court on earth, and sleep
Encompassed by his faithful guard,

And here at times a sentinel
  Who moves about from place to place, 10
  And whispers to the worlds of space,
In the deep night, that all is well.

CXXVII

And all is well, though faith and form
  Be sundered in the night of fear;
  Well roars the storm to those that hear
A deeper voice across the storm,

Proclaiming social truth shall spread, 5
  And justice, ev'n though thrice again

The red fool-fury of the Seine
Should pile her barricades with dead.

But ill for him that wears a crown,
And him, the lazar, in his rags. 10
They tremble, the sustaining crags;
The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood;
The fortress crashes from on high,
The brute earth lightens to the sky, 15
And the great Æon sinks in blood,

And compassed by the fires of hell;
While thou, dear spirit, happy star,
O'erlook'st the tumult from afar,
And smilest, knowing all is well. 20

CXXVIII

The love that rose on stronger wings,
Unpalsied when he met with Death,
Is comrade of the lesser faith
That sees the course of human things.

No doubt vast eddies in the flood 5
Of onward time shall yet be made,
And thronéd races may degrade;
Yet O ye mysteries of good,

Wild Hours that fly with Hope and Fear,
If all your office had to do 10
With old results that look like new;
If this were all your mission here,

To draw, to sheathe a useless sword,
To fool the crowd with glorious lies,
To cleave a creed in sects and cries, 15
To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,
To cramp the student at his desk,
To make old bareness picturesque
And tuft with grass a feudal tower, 20

Why then my scorn might well descend
On you and yours. I see in part
That all, as in some piece of art,
Is toil coöperant to an end.

(1850)

CXXVII. 7. **The red fool-fury**, etc., alluding to the Revolutions of 1830 and 1848 in Paris. 16. **Æon**, age.

ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON

Bury the Great Duke
With an empire's lamentation;
Let us bury the Great Duke
To the noise of the mourning of a mighty nation;
Mourning when their leaders fall, 5
Warriors carry the warrior's pall,
And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

Where shall we lay the man whom we deplore?
Here, in streaming London's central roar.
Let the sound of those he wrought for,
And the feet of those he fought for, 11
Echo round his bones for evermore.

Lead out the pageant; sad and slow,
As fits an universal woe,
Let the long, long procession go, 15
And let the sorrowing crowd about it grow,
And let the mournful martial music blow;
The last great Englishman is low.

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,
Remembering all his greatness in the past. 20
No more in soldier fashion will he greet
With lifted hand the gazer in the street.
O friends, our chief state-oracle is mute!
Mourn for the man of long-enduring blood,
The statesman warrior, moderate, resolute, 25
Whole in himself, a common good.
Mourn for the man of amplest influence,
Yet clearest of ambitious crime,
Our greatest yet with least pretense,
Great in council and great in war. 30
Foremost captain of his time,
Rich in saving common-sense,
And, as the greatest only are,
In his simplicity sublime.
O good gray head which all men knew, 35
O voice from which their omens all men drew,
O iron nerve to true occasion true,

Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington. Wellington died in 1852 and was buried in St. Paul's Cathedral. In the sixth stanza, as the procession approaches the Cathedral, Nelson, already buried there, welcomes the great general.

O fallen at length that tower of strength
Which stood four-square to all the winds that blew!
Such was he whom we deplore. 40
The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.
The great World-victor's victor will be seen no more.

All is over and done.
Render thanks to the Giver,
England, for thy son. 45
Let the bell be tolled.
Render thanks to the Giver,
And render him to the mold.
Under the cross of gold
That shines over city and river, 50
There he shall rest forever
Among the wise and the bold.
Let the bell be tolled,
And a reverent people behold
The towering car, the sable steeds. 55
Bright let it be with its blazoned deeds,
Dark in its funeral fold.
Let the bell be tolled,
And a deeper knell in the heart be knolled;
And the sound of the sorrowing anthem rolled 60
Through the dome of the golden cross;
And the volleying cannon thunder his loss;
He knew their voices of old.
For many a time in many a clime
His captain's-ear has heard them boom,
Bellowing victory, bellowing doom. 66
When he with those deep voices wrought
Guarding realms and kings from shame,
With those deep voices our dead captain taught
The tyrant, and asserts his claim 70
In that dread sound to the great name
Which he has worn so pure of blame,
In praise and in dispraise the same,
A man of well-attempered frame.
O civic muse, to such a name, 75
To such a name for ages long,
To such a name,
Preserve a broad approach of fame,
And ever-echoing avenues of song!

"Who is he that cometh, like an honored guest, 80
With banner and with music, with soldier and with priest,
With a nation weeping, and breaking on my rest?"—
Mighty Seaman, this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea.
Thine island loves thee well, thou famous man, 85
The greatest sailor since our world began.
Now, to the roll of muffled drums,
To thee the greatest soldier comes;
For this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea. 90
His foes were thine; he kept us free;
Oh, give him welcome, this is he
Worthy of our gorgeous rites,
And worthy to be laid by thee;
For this is England's greatest son, 95
He that gained a hundred fights,
Nor ever lost an English gun;
This is he that far away
Against the myriads of Assaye
Clashed with his fiery few and won; 100
And underneath another sun,
Warring on a later day,
Round affrighted Lisbon drew
The treble works, the vast designs
Of his labored rampart-lines, 105
Where he greatly stood at bay,
Whence he issued forth anew,
And ever great and greater grew,
Beating from the wasted vines
Back to France her banded swarms, 110
Back to France with countless blows,
Till o'er the hills her eagles flew
Beyond the Pyrenean pines,
Followed up in valley and glen
With blare of bugle, clamor of men, 115
Roll of cannon and clash of arms,
And England pouring on her foes,
Such a war had such a close.
Again their ravening eagle rose
In anger, wheeled on Europe-shadowing wings, 120
And barking for the thrones of kings;
Till one that sought but Duty's iron crown
On that loud Sabbath shook the spoiler down;
A day of onsets of despair!
Dashed on every rocky square, 125

99. **Assaye**, an Indian victory (1803) of Wellington. 103. **Lisbon**, the base of Wellington's Peninsular Campaigns against Napoleon (1809-1811). 123. **Sabbath.** Waterloo was fought on Sunday, June 18, 1815.

Their surging charges foamed themselves away;
Last, the Prussian trumpet blew;
Through the long-tormented air
Heaven flashed a sudden jubilant ray,
And down we swept and charged and overthrew. 130
So great a soldier taught us there
What long-enduring hearts could do
In that world-earthquake, Waterloo!
Mighty Seaman, tender and true,
And pure as he from taint of craven guile, 135
O savior of the silver-coasted isle,
O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,
If aught of things that here befall
Touch a spirit among things divine,
If love of country move thee there at all, 140
Be glad, because his bones are laid by thine!
And through the centuries let a people's voice
In full acclaim,
A people's voice,
The proof and echo of all human fame,
A people's voice, when they rejoice 146
At civic revel and pomp and game,
Attest their great commander's claim
With honor, honor, honor, honor to him,
Eternal honor to his name. 150

A people's voice! we are a people yet.
Though all men else their nobler dreams forget,
Confused by brainless mobs and lawless Powers,
Thank Him who isled us here, and roughly set
His Briton in blown seas and storming showers, 155
We have a voice with which to pay the debt
Of boundless love and reverence and regret
To those great men who fought, and kept it ours.
And keep it ours, O God, from brute control!
O Statesmen, guard us, guard the eye, the soul 160
Of Europe, keep our noble England whole,
And save the one true seed of freedom sown
Betwixt a people and their ancient throne,
That sober freedom out of which there springs
Our loyal passion for our temperate kings! 165
For, saving that, ye help to save mankind
Till public wrong be crumbled into dust,
And drill the raw world for the march of mind,
Till crowds at length be sane and crowns be just.
But wink no more in slothful overtrust. 170
Remember him who led your hosts;
He bade you guard the sacred coasts.
Your cannons molder on the seaward wall;
His voice is silent in your council-hall
Forever; and whatever tempests lour 175
Forever silent; even if they broke
In thunder, silent; yet remember all
He spoke among you, and the Man who spoke;
Who never sold the truth to serve the hour,
Nor paltered with Eternal God for power; 180
Who let the turbid streams of rumor flow
Through either babbling world of high and low;
Whose life was work, whose language rife
With rugged maxims hewn from life;
Who never spoke against a foe; 185
Whose eighty winters freeze with one rebuke
All great self-seekers trampling on the right.
Truth-teller was our England's Alfred named;
Truth-lover was our English Duke!
Whatever record leap to light 190
He never shall be shamed.

Lo! the leader in these glorious wars
Now to glorious burial slowly borne,
Followed by the brave of other lands,
He, on whom from both her open hands

127. **Prussian trumpet.** Blücher brought up reënforcements which enabled Wellington to win Waterloo.
137. **Baltic and Nile,** two of Nelson's naval victories.

Lavish Honor showered all her stars, 196
And affluent Fortune emptied all her horn.
Yea, let all good things await
Him who cares not to be great
But as he saves or serves the state. 200
Not once or twice in our rough island-story
The path of duty was the way to glory.
He that walks it, only thirsting
For the right, and learns to deaden
Love of self, before his journey closes,
He shall find the stubborn thistle bursting 206
Into glossy purples, which out-redden
All voluptuous garden-roses.
Not once or twice in our fair island-story
The path of duty was the way to glory. 210
He, that ever following her commands,
On with toil of heart and knees and hands,
Through the long gorge to the far light has won
His path upward, and prevailed,
Shall find the toppling crags of Duty scaled 215
Are close upon the shining table lands
To which our God himself is moon and sun.
Such was he; his work is done.
But while the races of mankind endure
Let his great example stand 220
Colossal, seen of every land,
And keep the soldier firm, the statesman pure;
Till in all lands and through all human story
The path of duty be the way to glory.
And let the land whose hearths he saved from shame 225
For many and many an age proclaim
At civic revel and pomp and game,
And when the long-illumined cities flame,
Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,
With honor, honor, honor, honor to him, 230
Eternal honor to his name.

Peace, his triumph will be sung
By some yet unmolded tongue
Far on in summers that we shall not see.
Peace, it is a day of pain 235
For one about whose patriarchal knee
Late the little children clung.
O peace, it is a day of pain
For one upon whose hand and heart and brain 239
Once the weight and fate of Europe hung.
Ours the pain, be his the gain!
More than is of man's degree
Must be with us, watching here
At this, our great solemnity.
Whom we see not we revere; 245
We revere, and we refrain
From talk of battles loud and vain,
And brawling memories all too free
For such a wise humility
As befits a solemn fane. 250
We revere, and while we hear
The tides of Music's golden sea
Setting toward eternity,
Uplifted high in heart and hope are we,
Until we doubt not that for one so true
There must be other nobler work to do
Than when he fought at Waterloo, 257
And victor he must ever be.
For though the Giant Ages heave the hill
And break the shore, and evermore 260
Make and break, and work their will,
Though world on world in myriad myriads roll
Round us, each with different powers,
And other forms of life than ours,
What know we greater than the soul? 265
On God and Godlike men we build our trust.
Hush, the Dead March wails in the people's ears;
The dark crowd moves, and there are sobs and tears;
The black earth yawns; the mortal disappears;
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust; 270
He is gone who seemed so great.—
Gone, but nothing can bereave him
Of the force he made his own
Being here, and we believe him
Something far advanced in state, 275
And that he wears a truer crown
Than any wreath that man can weave him.
Speak no more of his renown,
Lay your earthly fancies down,
And in the vast cathedral leave him, 280
God accept him, Christ receive him!

(1852, 1855)

HANDS ALL ROUND

First pledge our Queen this solemn night,
Then drink to England, every guest;
That man's the best cosmopolite
Who loves his native country best.
May Freedom's oak forever live 5
With stronger life from day to day;
That man's the true Conservative
Who lops the moldered branch away.
Hands all round!
God the traitor's hope confound! 10
To this great cause of Freedom drink, my friends,
And the great name of England, round and round.

To all the loyal hearts who long
To keep our English Empire whole!
To all our noble sons, the strong, 15
New England of the Southern Pole!
To England under Indian skies,
To those dark millions of her realm!
To Canada, whom we love and prize,
Whatever statesman hold the helm. 20
Hands all round!
God the traitor's hope confound!
To this great name of England drink, my friends,
And all her glorious empire, round and round.

To all our statesmen so they be 25
True leaders of the land's desire!
To both our Houses, may they see
Beyond the borough and the shire!
We sailed wherever ship could sail,
We founded many a mighty state; 30
Pray God our greatness may not fail
Through craven fears of being great!
Hands all round!
God the traitor's hope confound!
To this great cause of Freedom drink, my friends, 35
And the great name of England, round and round.

(1852, 1882)

Hands All Round. Written in honor of Queen Victoria's birthday, in 1852. 27. **Houses**, the houses of Parliament.

THE BROOK

I come from haunts of coot and hern,
I make a sudden sally,
And sparkle out among the fern,
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down, 5
Or slip between the ridges,
By twenty thorps, a little town,
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow
To join the brimming river, 10
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on forever.

I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays, 15
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret
By many a field and fallow,
And many a fairy foreland set
With willow-weed and mallow. 20

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on forever.

I wind about, and in and out, 25
With here a blossom sailing,
And here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake
Upon me, as I travel 30
With many a silvery water-break
Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go, 35
But I go on forever.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
I slide by hazel covers;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers. 40

7. **thorps**, villages.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
  Among my skimming swallows;
I make the netted sunbeam dance
  Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars 45
  In brambly wildernesses;
I linger by my shingly bars,
  I loiter round my cresses;

And out again I curve and flow
  To join the brimming river, 50
For men may come and men may go,
  But I go on forever. (1855)

COME INTO THE GARDEN, MAUD

From MAUD

Come into the garden, Maud,
  For the black bat, Night, has flown,
Come into the garden, Maud,
  I am here at the gate alone;
And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad, 5
  And the musk of the rose is blown.

For a breeze of morning moves,
  And the planet of Love is on high,
Beginning to faint in the light that she loves
  On a bed of daffodil sky, 10
To faint in the light of the sun she loves,
  To faint in his light, and to die.

All night have the roses heard
  The flute, violin, bassoon;
All night has the casement jessamine stirred 15
  To the dancers dancing in tune;
Till a silence fell with the waking bird,
  And a hush with the setting moon.

I said to the lily, "There is but one
  With whom she has heart to be gay. 20
When will the dancers leave her alone?
  She is weary of dance and play."
Now half to the setting moon are gone,
  And half to the rising day;
Low on the sand and loud on the stone 25
  The last wheel echoes away.

I said to the rose, "The brief night goes
  In babble and revel and wine.
O young lord-lover, what sighs are those
  For one that will never be thine? 30
But mine, but mine," so I sware to the rose,
  "Forever and ever, mine."

And the soul of the rose went into my blood,
  As the music clashed in the hall;
And long by the garden lake I stood, 35
  For I heard your rivulet fall
From the lake to the meadow and on to the wood,
  Our wood, that is dearer than all;

From the meadow your walks have left so sweet
  That whenever a March-wind sighs 40
He sets the jewel-print of your feet
  In violets blue as your eyes,
To the woody hollows in which we meet
  And the valleys of Paradise.

The slender acacia would not shake 45
  One long milk-bloom on the tree;
The white lake-blossom fell into the lake,
  As the pimpernel dozed on the lea;
But the rose was awake all night for your sake,
  Knowing your promise to me; 50
The lilies and roses were all awake,
  They sighed for the dawn and thee.

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,
  Come hither, the dances are done,
In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls, 55
  Queen lily and rose in one;
Shine out, little head, sunning over with curls,
  To the flowers, and be their sun.

There has fallen a splendid tear
  From the passion-flower at the gate. 60
She is coming, my dove, my dear;

Come into the Garden, Maud: *Maud* is a lyric monodrama of love, composed of lyrics reflecting the emotions of a brooding and fearful lover. The first lyric given here reflects the emotions of the lover as he sees Maud at a dance, to which he has not been invited, dancing with his rival, a young lord.

She is coming, my life, my fate;
The red rose cries, "She is near, she is near";
And the white rose weeps, "She is late";
The larkspur listens, "I hear, I hear"; 65
And the lily whispers, "I wait."

She is coming, my own, my sweet;
Were it ever so airy a tread,
My heart would hear her and beat,
Were it earth in an earthy bed; 70
My dust would hear her and beat,
Had I lain for a century dead;
Would start and tremble under her feet,
And blossom in purple and red.
(1855)

O THAT 'TWERE POSSIBLE

From MAUD

O that 'twere possible
After long grief and pain
To find the arms of my true love
Round me once again! . . .

A shadow flits before me, 5
Not thou, but like to thee.
Ah, Christ! that it were possible
For one short hour to see
The souls we loved, that they might tell us
What and where they be! (1855)

MILTON

*(Alcaics)

O mighty-mouthed inventor of harmonies,
O skilled to sing of Time or Eternity,
God-gifted organ-voice of England,
Milton, a name to resound for ages:
Whose Titan angels, Gabriel, Abdiel, 5
Starred from Jehovah's gorgeous armories,
Tower, as the deep-domed empyrean
Rings to the roar of an angel onset!
Me rather all that bowery loneliness,
The brooks of Eden mazily murmuring, 10
And bloom profuse and cedar arches
Charm, as a wanderer out in ocean,
Where some refulgent sunset of India
Streams o'er a rich ambrosial ocean, isle,
And crimson-hued the stately palm-woods 15
Whisper in odorous heights of even.
(1863)

*A stanza named after Alcaeus, a Greek lyric poet of the sixth century, B.C.

FLOWER IN THE CRANNIED WALL

Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies,
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower—but *if* I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all, 5
I should know what God and man is.
(1869)

TO VERGIL

WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF THE MANTUANS FOR THE NINETEENTH CENTURY OF VERGIL'S DEATH

Roman Vergil, thou that singest Ilion's lofty temples robed in fire,
Ilion falling, Rome arising, wars, and filial faith, and Dido's pyre;

Landscape-lover, lord of language more than he that sang the "Works and Days,"
All the chosen coin of fancy flashing out from many a golden phrase;

Thou that singest wheat and woodland, tilth and vineyard, hive and horse and herd; 5
All the charm of all the Muses often flowering in a lonely word;

To Vergil. 1. **Ilion**, Troy. 2. **Dido's pyre.** When Aeneas sailed away to Italy, Dido committed suicide. Tennyson refers in this stanza to the *Aeneid.* 3. **Works and Days**, a Greek poem on farming by Hesiod (seventh century, B.C.). 5. **singest wheat**, etc., referring to Vergil's poems on farming, the *Georgics.*

Poet of the happy Tityrus piping underneath his beechen bowers;
Poet of the poet-satyr whom the laughing shepherd bound with flowers;

Chanter of the Pollio, glorying in the blissful years again to be,
Summers of the snakeless meadow, unlaborious earth and oarless sea; 10

Thou that seest Universal Nature moved by Universal Mind;
Thou majestic in thy sadness at the doubtful doom of human kind;

Light among the vanished ages; star that gildest yet this phantom shore;
Golden branch amid the shadows, kings and realms that pass to rise no more;

Now thy Forum roars no longer, fallen every purple Cæsar's dome— 15
Though thine ocean-roll of rhythm sound forever of Imperial Rome—

Now the Rome of slaves hath perished, and the Rome of freemen holds her place,
I, from out the northern island sundered once from all the human race,

I salute thee, Mantovano, I that loved thee since my day began,
Wielder of the stateliest measure ever molded by the lips of man.

(1882)

FAR—FAR—AWAY

(FOR MUSIC)

What sight so lured him through the fields he knew
As where earth's green stole into heaven's own hue,
Far—far—away?

What sound was dearest in his native dells?
The mellow lin-lan-lone of evening bells
Far—far—away. 6

What vague world-whisper, mystic pain or joy,
Through those three words would haunt him when a boy,
Far—far—away?

A whisper from his dawn of life? a breath 10
From some fair dawn beyond the doors of death
Far—far—away?

Far, far, how far? From o'er the gates of birth,
The faint horizons, all the bounds of earth,
Far—far—away? 15

What charm in words, a charm no words could give?
O dying words, can Music make you live
Far—far—away? (1889)

CROSSING THE BAR

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam, 6
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark! 10
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For though from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face 15
When I have crossed the bar. (1889)

7. **Tityrus**, a shepherd in Vergil's *Eclogues*. 9. **Pollio**, a friend of Vergil to whom he dedicated the Fourth Eclogue with its prophecy of the return of the Golden Age. 19. **Mantovano**. Vergil came from Mantua.
Far—Far—Away. Cf. "Voices" (page 628).

*ROBERT BROWNING (1812-1889)

OVER THE SEA OUR GALLEYS WENT

FROM PARACELSUS†

Over the sea our galleys went,
With cleaving prows in order brave
To a speeding wind and a bounding wave—
A gallant armament;
Each bark built out of a forest-tree 5
Left leafy and rough as first it grew,
And nailed all over the gaping sides,
Within and without, with black bull-hides,
Seethed in fat and suppled in flame,
To bear the playful billows' game; 10
So, each good ship was rude to see,
Rude and bare to the outward view,
But each upbore a stately tent
Where cedar pales in scented row
Kept out the flakes of the dancing brine, 15
And an awning drooped the mast below
In fold on fold of the purple fine,
That neither noontide nor star-shine
Nor moonlight cold which maketh mad,
Might pierce the regal tenement. 20
When the sun dawned, oh, gay and glad
We set the sail and plied the oar;
But when the night-wind blew like breath,
For joy of one day's voyage more,
We sang together on the wide sea, 25
Like men at peace on a peaceful shore;
Each sail was loosed to the wind so free,
Each helm made sure by the twilight star,
And in a sleep as calm as death,
We, the voyagers from afar, 30
Lay stretched along, each weary crew
In a circle round its wondrous tent
Whence gleamed soft light and curled rich scent,
And with light and perfume, music, too.
So the stars wheeled round, and the darkness past, 35
And at morn we started beside the mast,
And still each ship was sailing fast.

Now, one morn, land appeared—a speck
Dim trembling betwixt sea and sky—
"Avoid it," cried our pilot, "check 40
The shout, restrain the eager eye!"
But the heaving sea was black behind
For many a night and many a day,
And land, though but a rock, drew nigh;
So we broke the cedar pales away, 45
Let the purple awning flap in the wind,
And a statue bright was on every deck!
We shouted, every man of us,
And steered right into the harbor thus,
With pomp and paean glorious. 50

A hundred shapes of lucid stone!
All day we built its shrine for each,
A shrine of rock for every one,
Nor paused till in the westering sun
We sat together on the beach 55
To sing because our task was done;
When lo! what shouts and merry songs!
What laughter all the distance stirs!
A loaded raft with happy throngs
Of gentle islanders! 60
"Our isles are just at hand," they cried,
"Like cloudlets faint in even sleeping;
Our temple-gates are opened wide,
Our olive-groves thick shade are keeping
For these majestic forms"—they cried.
Oh, then we awoke with sudden start 66
From our deep dream, and knew, too late,
How bare the rock, how desolate,
Which had received our precious freight.
Yet we called out—"Depart! 70
Our gifts, once given, must here abide;
Our work is done; we have no heart
To mar our work"—we cried.

(1835)

*See headnote on Browning, page 290. His energetic and hopeful spirit impelled him to search for the meaning of life. To him love ruled the universe, and on earth two of its channels were power and knowledge. But Browning made his search inductively, by portraying important crises in the lives of individuals. Besides developing the dramatic monologue, which is a blend of the lyric, the narrative, and the dramatic, he wrote many beautiful lyric poems, some of the loveliest of which are addressed to Mrs. Browning.

†Paracelsus (1493-1541) was a medieval physician, scientist, and astrologer, who made many medical and chemical discoveries highly valued by modern science. Browning makes him the incarnation of the soul struggling to obtain wisdom, and going astray because he neglected the power of love. The lyric here given embodies the supposed experience of some Greek colonists, who placed their most beautiful statues, representing their ideals, on a barren rock, because they did not persist quite long enough in their search for a more suitable shrine. Cf. "The Explorer" (page 609).

THE YEAR'S AT THE SPRING

*From PIPPA PASSES

The year's at the spring,
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hillside's dew-pearled;
The lark's on the wing; 5
The snail's on the thorn;
God's in his heaven—
All's right with the world!

YOU'LL LOVE ME YET

From PIPPA PASSES

You'll love me yet!—and I can tarry
Your love's protracted growing;
June reared that bunch of flowers you carry,
From seeds of April's sowing.

I plant a heartful now: some seed 5
At least is sure to strike,
And yield—what you'll not pluck indeed,
Not love, but, may be, like.

You'll look at least on love's remains,
A grave's one violet. 10
Your look?—that pays a thousand pains.
What's death? You'll love me yet!
(1841)

THE MOTH'S KISS, FIRST!

From IN A GONDOLA

The moth's kiss, first!
Kiss me as if you made believe
You were not sure, this eve,
How my face, your flower, had pursed
Its petals up; so, here and there 5
You brush it, till I grow aware
Who wants me, and wide ope I burst.

The bee's kiss, now!
Kiss me as if you entered gay
My heart at some noonday, 10
A bud that dares not disallow
The claim, so all is rendered up,
And passively its shattered cup
Over your head to sleep I bow.
(1843)

THERE'S A WOMAN LIKE A DEWDROP

From A BLOT IN THE 'SCUTCHEON

There's a woman like a dewdrop, she's so purer than the purest;
And her noble heart's the noblest, yes, and her sure faith's the surest;
And her eyes are dark and humid, like the depth on depth of luster
Hid i' the harebell, while her tresses, sunnier than the wild-grape cluster,
Gush in golden-tinted plenty down her neck's rose-misted marble. 5
Then her voice's music . . . call it the well's bubbling, the bird's warble!
And this woman says, "My days were sunless and my nights were moonless,
Parched the pleasant April herbage, and the lark's heart's outbreak tuneless,
If you loved me not!" And I who—(ah, for words of flame!) adore her,
Who am mad to lay my spirit prostrate palpably before her— 10
I may enter at her portal soon, as now her lattice takes me,
And by noontide as by midnight make her mine, as hers she makes me!
(1843)

THE LOST LEADER

Just for a handful of silver he left us,
Just for a riband to stick in his coat—
Found the one gift of which fortune bereft us,
Lost all the others she lets us devote;
They, with the gold to give, doled him out silver, 5

Pippa Passes is a lyric drama in which a poor little factory worker of Asolo, a village near Venice, spends her one day a year of vacation in imagining what she would do were she in the place of four great people in Asolo. As she passes by their houses, she sings a song expressive of what she would think and do if she were each.

You'll Love Me Yet. Sung by a girl whom Pippa meets. Cf. "As Through the Land at Eve We Went" (page 531).

The Lost Leader. Title. Browning had Wordsworth in mind as the type of lost leader; in his middle age Wordsworth changed from a radical to a conservative.

So much was theirs who so little allowed.
How all our copper had gone for his service!
Rags—were they purple, his heart had been proud!
We that had loved him so, followed him, honored him,
Lived in his mild and magnificent eye, 10
Learned his great language, caught his clear accents,
Made him our pattern to live and to die!
Shakespeare was of us, Milton was for us,
Burns, Shelley, were with us—they watch from their graves!
He alone breaks from the van and the freemen 15
—He alone sinks to the rear and the slaves!
We shall march prospering—not through his presence;
Songs may inspirit us—not from his lyre;
Deeds will be done—while he boasts his quiescence,
Still bidding crouch whom the rest bade aspire. 20
Blot out his name, then, record one lost soul more,
One task more declined, one more footpath untrod,
One more devils'-triumph and sorrow for angels,
One wrong more to man, one more insult to God!
Life's night begins; let him never come back to us! 25
There would be doubt, hesitation, and pain,
Forced praise on our part—the glimmer of twilight,
Never glad confident morning again!
Best fight on well, for we taught him—strike gallantly,
Menace our heart ere we master his own; 30
Then let him receive the new knowledge and wait us,
Pardoned in heaven, the first by the throne!

(1845)

MEETING AT NIGHT

The gray sea and the long black land;
And the yellow half-moon large and low;
And the startled little waves that leap
In fiery ringlets from their sleep,
As I gain the cove with pushing prow, 5
And quench its speed i' the slushy sand.

Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach;
Three fields to cross till a farm appears;
A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch
And blue spurt of a lighted match, 10
And a voice less loud, through its joys and fears,
Than the two hearts beating each to each!

(1845)

PARTING AT MORNING

Round the cape of a sudden came the sea,
And the sun looked over the mountain's rim:
And straight was a path of gold for him,
And the need of a world of men for me.

(1845)

HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM ABROAD

Oh, to be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf 5
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England—now!

And after April, when May follows,
And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows! 10
Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's edge—

That's the wise thrush; he sings each
song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could
recapture 15
The first fine careless rapture!
And though the fields look rough with
hoary dew,
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's
dower
—Far brighter than this gaudy melon-
flower. (1845)

HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM THE SEA

Nobly, nobly Cape Saint Vincent to the
northwest died away;
Sunset ran, one glorious blood-red,
reeking into Cadiz Bay;
Bluish 'mid the burning water, full in
face Trafalgar lay;
In the dimmest northeast distance
dawned Gibraltar grand and gray;
"Here and here did England help me;
how can I help England?"—say,
Whoso turns as I, this evening, turn to
God to praise and pray, 6
While Jove's planet rises yonder, silent
over Africa. (1845)

MY STAR

All that I know
Of a certain star
Is, it can throw
(Like the angled spar)
Now a dart of red, 5
Now a dart of blue,
Till my friends have said
They would fain see, too,
My star that dartles the red and the
blue!
Then it stops like a bird; like a flower,
hangs furled. 10
They must solace themselves with
the Saturn above it.
What matter to me if their star is a
world?
Mine has opened its soul to me; there-
fore I love it. (1855)

TWO IN THE CAMPAGNA

I wonder do you feel today
As I have felt since, hand in hand,
We sat down on the grass, to stray
In spirit better through the land,
This morn of Rome and May? 5

For me, I touched a thought I know
Has tantalized me many times,
(Like turns of thread the spiders throw
Mocking across our path) for rimes
To catch at and let go. 10

Help me to hold it! First it left
The yellowing fennel, run to seed
There, branching from the brickwork's
cleft,
Some old tomb's ruin; yonder weed
Took up the floating weft, 15

Where one small orange cup amassed
Five beetles—blind and green they
grope
Among the honey-meal: and last,
Everywhere on the grassy slope
I traced it. Hold it fast! 20

The champaign with its endless fleece
Of feathery grasses everywhere!
Silence and passion, joy and peace,
An everlasting wash of air—
Rome's ghost since her decease. 25

Such life here, through such lengths of
hours,
Such miracles performed in play,
Such primal naked forms of flowers,
Such letting nature have her way,
While heaven looks from its towers! 30

How say you? Let us, O my dove,
Let us be unashamed of soul,
As earth lies bare to heaven above!
How is it under our control
To love or not to love? 35

Home Thoughts, from the Sea. Written, in 1845, while on a ship in the Mediterranean. The places named witnessed some of the most glorious scenes of English valor, centering around the career of Nelson.

My Star. Mrs. Browning is meant. 3. **can throw,** etc. Crystals of Iceland spar refract light as any prism would do.

Two in the Campagna. This poem shows an effort to retain the moment of perfect understanding in life and love. The Campagna is the level plain outside Rome.

I would that you were all to me,
  You that are just so much, no more.
Nor yours nor mine, nor slave nor free!
  Where does the fault lie? What the core
O' the wound, since wound must be? 40

I would I could adopt your will,
  See with your eyes, and set my heart
Beating by yours, and drink my fill
  At your soul's springs—your part my part
In life, for good and ill. 45

No. I yearn upward, touch you close,
  Then stand away. I kiss your cheek,
Catch your soul's warmth—I pluck the rose
  And love it more than tongue can speak—
Then the good minute goes. 50

Already how am I so far
  Out of that minute? Must I go
Still like the thistle-ball, no bar,
  Onward, whenever light winds blow,
Fixed by no friendly star? 55

Just when I seemed about to learn!
  Where is the thread now? Off again!
The old trick! Only I discern—
  Infinite passion, and the pain
Of finite hearts that yearn.

(1855)

IN THREE DAYS

So, I shall see her in three days
And just one night, but nights are short,
Then two long hours, and that is morn.
See how I come, unchanged, unworn!
Feel, where my life broke off from thine,
How fresh the splinters keep and fine— 6
Only a touch and we combine!

Too long, this time of year, the days!
But nights, at least the nights are short.
As night shows where her one moon is, 10
A hand's-breadth of pure light and bliss,
So life's night gives my lady birth
And my eyes hold her! What is worth
The rest of heaven, the rest of earth?

O loaded curls, release your store 15
Of warmth and scent, as once before
The tingling hair did, lights and darks
Outbreaking into fairy sparks,
When under curl and curl I pried
After the warmth and scent inside, 20
Through lights and darks how manifold—
The dark inspired, the light controlled!
As early Art embrowns the gold.

What great fear, should one say, "Three days
That change the world might change as well 25
Your fortune; and if joy delays,
Be happy that no worse befell!"
What small fear, if another says,
"Three days and one short night beside
May throw no shadow on your ways; 30
But years must teem with change untried,
With chance not easily defied,
With an end somewhere undescried."
No fear!—or if a fear be born
This minute, it dies out in scorn. 35
Fear? I shall see her in three days
And one night, now the nights are short,
Then just two hours, and that is morn.

(1855)

MEMORABILIA

Ah, did you once see Shelley plain,
  And did he stop and speak to you,
And did you speak to him again?
  How strange it seems and new!

But you were living before that, 5
  And also you are living after;
And the memory I started at—
  My starting moves your laughter!

I crossed a moor, with a name of its own
  And a certain use in the world no doubt, 10
Yet a hand's-breadth of it shines alone
  'Mid the blank miles round about;

For there I picked up on the heather
  And there I put inside my breast
A moulted feather, an eagle-feather! 15
  Well, I forget the rest.

(1855)

A GRAMMARIAN'S FUNERAL

SHORTLY AFTER THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING IN EUROPE

Let us begin and carry up this corpse,
Singing together.
Leave we the common crofts, the vulgar thorpes
Each in its tether
Sleeping safe on the bosom of the plain,
Cared-for till cock-crow; 6
Look out if yonder be not day again
Rimming the rock-row!
That's the appropriate country; there, man's thought,
Rarer, intenser, 10
Self-gathered for an outbreak, as it ought,
Chafes in the censer.
Leave we the unlettered plain its herd and crop;
Seek we sepulture
On a tall mountain, citied to the top, 15
Crowded with culture!
All the peaks soar, but one the rest excels;
Clouds overcome it;
No! yonder sparkle is the citadel's
Circling its summit. 20
Thither our path lies; wind we up the heights;
Wait ye the warning?
Our low life was the level's and the night's;
He's for the morning.
Step to a tune, square chests, erect each head, 25
'Ware the beholders!
This is our master, famous, calm, and dead,
Borne on our shoulders.

Sleep, crop and herd! sleep, darkling thorpe and croft,
Safe from the weather! 30
He, whom we convoy to his grave aloft,
Singing together,
He was a man born with thy face and throat,
Lyric Apollo!
Long he lived nameless; how should Spring take note 35
Winter would follow?
Till lo, the little touch, and youth was gone!
Cramped and diminished,
Moaned he, "New measures, other feet anon!
My dance is finished?" 40
No, that's the world's way (keep the mountain-side,
Make for the city!).
He knew the signal, and stepped on with pride
Over men's pity;
Left play for work, and grappled with the world 45
Bent on escaping.
"What's in the scroll," quoth he, "thou keepst furled?
Show me their shaping,
Theirs who most studied man, the bard and sage—
Give!"—So, he gowned him, 50
Straight got by heart that book to its last page;
Learned, we found him.
Yea, but we found him bald, too, eyes like lead,
Accents uncertain.
"Time to taste life," another would have said, 55
"Up with the curtain!"
This man said rather, "Actual life comes next?
Patience a moment!
Grant I have mastered learning's crabbed text,
Still there's the comment. 60
Let me know all! Prate not of most or least,
Painful or easy!
Even to the crumbs I'd fain eat up the feast,
Aye, nor feel queasy."
Oh, such a life as he resolved to live, 65
When he had learned it,
When he had gathered all books had to give!
Sooner, he spurned it.
Image the whole, then execute the parts,

A Grammarian's Funeral. The three elements of the lyric, narrative, and dramatic are blended in this poem. The Renaissance edited with metieulous care every scrap of Greek and Roman literature. This poem represents the apotheosis of a scholar. The Master has inspired his pupils with his ardor, and although they do not understand completely the value of his work, they express their admiration by this mountain burial, far away from and above the crowd. 3. **crofts**, fenced fields. **thorpes**, villages.

Fancy the fabric 70
Quite, ere you build, ere steel strike fire from quartz,
Ere mortar dab brick!

(Here's the town-gate reached; there's the market-place
Gaping before us.)
Yea, this in him was the peculiar grace
(Hearten our chorus!) 76
That before living he'd learn how to live—
No end to learning.
Earn the means first—God surely will contrive
Use for our earning. 80
Others mistrust and say, "But time escapes;
Live now or never!"
He said, "What's time? Leave Now for dogs and apes!
Man has Forever."
Back to his book then; deeper drooped his head; 85
Calculus racked him.
Leaden before, his eyes grew dross of lead;
Tussis attacked him.
"Now, master, take a little rest!"—not he!
(Caution redoubled, 90
Step two abreast, the way winds narrowly!)
Not a whit troubled,
Back to his studies, fresher than at first,
Fierce as a dragon
He (soul-hydroptic with a sacred thirst)
Sucked at the flagon. 96
Oh, if we draw a circle premature,
Heedless of far gain,
Greedy for quick returns of profit, sure
Bad is our bargain! 100
Was it not great? did not he throw on God,
(He loves the burthen)—
God's task to make the heavenly period
Perfect the earthen?
Did not he magnify the mind, show clear 105
Just what it all meant?
He would not discount life, as fools do here,
Paid by installment.

86. **Calculus**, gall or kidney stone. 88. **Tussis**, a cough. 95. **soul-hydroptic**, dropsical of soul, i.e., tending to absorb in his soul the sacred water of learning.

He ventured neck or nothing—heaven's success
Found, or earth's failure: 110
"Wilt thou trust death or not?" He answered "Yes!
Hence with life's pale lure!"
That low man seeks a little thing to do,
Sees it and does it;
This high man, with a great thing to pursue, 115
Dies ere he knows it.
That low man goes on adding one to one,
His hundred's soon hit;
This high man, aiming at a million,
Misses an unit. 120
That, has the world here—should he need the next,
Let the world mind him!
This, throws himself on God, and unperplexed
Seeking shall find him.
So, with the throttling hands of death at strife, 125
Ground he at grammar;
Still, through the rattle, parts of speech were rife.
While he could stammer,
He settled *Hoti's* business—let it be!—
Properly based *Oun*— 130
Gave us the doctrine of the enclitic *De*,
Dead from the waist down.
Well, here's the platform, here's the proper place.
Hail to your purlieus,
All ye highflyers of the feathered race,
Swallows and curlews! 136
Here's the top-peak; the multitude below
Live, for they can, there:
This man decided not to Live but Know—
Bury this man there? 140
Here—here's his place, where meteors shoot, clouds form,
Lightnings are loosened,
Stars come and go! Let joy break with the storm,
Peace let the dew send!
Lofty designs must close in like effects.
Loftily lying, 146
Leave him—still loftier than the world suspects,
Living and dying. (1855)

129-131. **Hoti, Oun, De**, Greek words meaning *that, now, and*.

ONE WORD MORE

TO E. B. B.

London, September, 1855

There they are, my fifty men and women
Naming me the fifty poems finished!
Take them, Love, the book and me together;
Where the heart lies, let the brain lie also.

Rafael made a century of sonnets, 5
Made and wrote them in a certain volume
Dinted with the silver-pointed pencil
Else he only used to draw Madonnas.
These, the world might view—but one, the volume.
Who that one, you ask? Your heart instructs you. 10
Did she live and love it all her lifetime?
Did she drop, his lady of the sonnets,
Die, and let it drop beside her pillow
Where it lay in place of Rafael's glory,
Rafael's cheek so duteous and so loving— 15
Cheek, the world was wont to hail a painter's,
Rafael's cheek, her love had turned a poet's?

You and I would rather read that volume,
(Taken to his beating bosom by it)
Lean and list the bosom-beats of Rafael,
Would we not? than wonder at Madonnas— 21
Her, San Sisto names, and Her, Foligno,
Her, that visits Florence in a vision,
Her, that's left with lilies in the Louvre—
Seen by us and all the world in circle. 25

You and I will never read that volume.
Guido Reni, like his own eye's apple
Guarded long the treasure-book and loved it.
Guido Reni dying, all Bologna
Cried, and the world cried too, "Ours, the treasure!" 30
Suddenly, as rare things will, it vanished.

Dante once prepared to paint an angel;
Whom to please? You whisper "Beatrice."
While he mused and traced it and retraced it,
(Peradventure with a pen corroded 35
Still by drops of that hot ink he dipped for,
When, his left hand i' the hair o' the wicked,
Back he held the brow and pricked its stigma,
Bit into the live man's flesh for parchment,
Loosed him, laughed to see the writing rankle, 40
Let the wretch go festering through Florence)—
Dante, who loved well because he hated,
Hated wickedness that hinders loving,
Dante standing, studying his angel—
In there broke the folk of his Inferno. 45
Says he—"Certain people of importance"
(Such he gave his daily dreadful line to)
"Entered and would seize, forsooth, the poet."
Says the poet—"Then I stopped my painting."

You and I would rather see that angel,
Painted by the tenderness of Dante, 51
Would we not?—than read a fresh Inferno.

You and I will never see that picture.
While he mused on love and Beatrice,
While he softened o'er his outlined angel, 55
In they broke, those "people of importance."
We and Bice bear the loss forever.

What of Rafael's sonnets, Dante's picture?
This: no artist lives and loves, that longs not
Once, and only once, and for one only 60
(Ah, the prize!), to find his love a language
Fit and fair and simple and sufficient—
Using nature that's an art to others,

One Word More. In 1855 Browning published *Men and Women*, containing fifty character sketches, many of them dramatic monologues. This last poem dedicated the work to Mrs. Browning. 5. **century**, one hundred; a sonnet sequence. 21. **Madonnas.** Browning now names some of the most famous Madonnas by Raphael.

32. **Dante**, etc. In the *Vita Nuova* (The New Life) XXXV, Dante relates this incident. This book and *The Divine Comedy* record his love for Beatrice Portinari. 57. **Bice**, Beatrice.

Not, this one time, art that's turned his nature.
Aye, of all the artists living, loving, 65
None but would forego his proper dowry—
Does he paint? He fain would write a poem—
Does he write? He fain would paint a picture,
Put to proof art alien to the artist's,
Once, and only once, and for one only, 70
So to be the man and leave the artist,
Gain the man's joy, miss the artist's sorrow.

Wherefore? Heaven's gift takes earth's abatement!
He who smites the rock and spreads the water,
Bidding drink and live a crowd beneath him, 75
Even he, the minute makes immortal,
Proves, perchance, but mortal in the minute,
Desecrates, belike, the deed in doing.
While he smites, how can he but remember,
So he smote before, in such a peril, 80
When they stood and mocked—"Shall smiting help us?"
When they drank and sneered—"A stroke is easy!"
When they wiped their mouths and went their journey,
Throwing him for thanks — "But drought was pleasant."
Thus old memories mar the actual triumph; 85
Thus the doing savors of disrelish;
Thus achievement lacks a gracious somewhat;
O'er-importuned brows becloud the mandate,
Carelessness or consciousness—the gesture.
For he bears an ancient wrong about him, 90
Sees and knows again those phalanxed faces,
Hears, yet one time more, the 'customed prelude—
"How shouldst thou, of all men, smite, and save us?"

74. **He who smites**, etc. See Exodus xvii.

Guesses what is like to prove the sequel—
"Egypt's flesh-pots—nay, the drought was better." 95

Oh, the crowd must have emphatic warrant!
Theirs, the Sinai-forehead's cloven brilliance,
Right-arm's rod-sweep, tongue's imperial fiat.
Never dares the man put off the prophet.
Did he love one face from out the thousands, 100
(Were she Jethro's daughter, white and wifely,
Were she but the Aethiopian bondslave),
He would envy yon dumb patient camel,
Keeping a reserve of scanty water
Meant to save his own life in the desert;
Ready in the desert to deliver 106
(Kneeling down to let his breast be opened)
Hoard and life together for his mistress.

I shall never, in the years remaining,
Paint you pictures, no, nor carve you statues, 110
Make you music that should all-express me;
So it seems; I stand on my attainment.
This of verse alone, one life allows me;
Verse and nothing else have I to give you.
Other heights in other lives, God willing; 115
All the gifts from all the heights, your own, Love!

Yet a semblance of resource avails us—
Shade so finely touched, love's sense must seize it.
Take these lines, look lovingly and nearly,
Lines I write the first time and the last time. 120
He who works in fresco steals a hair-brush,
Curbs the liberal hand, subservient proudly,

97. **Sinai-forehead's cloven brilliance.** Exodus xix, 9, 16 and xxxiv, 30 tell how the face of Moses shone on returning to the Children of Israel after communing with God on Mt. Sinai. 101. **Jethro's daughter,** Moses's wife. 121. **fresco,** a difficult type of painting, for correction is well-nigh impossible.

Cramps his spirit, crowds its all in little,
Makes a strange art of an art familiar,
Fills his lady's missal-marge with flowerets. 125
He who blows through bronze may breathe through silver,
Fitly serenade a slumbrous princess.
He who writes may write for once as I do.

Love, you saw me gather men and women,
Live or dead or fashioned by my fancy,
Enter each and all, and use their service, 131
Speak from every mouth—the speech, a poem.
Hardly shall I tell my joys and sorrows,
Hopes and fears, belief and disbelieving.
I am mine and yours—the rest be all men's, 135
Karshish, Cleon, Norbert, and the fifty.
Let me speak this once in my true person,
Not as Lippo, Roland, or Andrea,
Though the fruit of speech be just this sentence:
Pray you, look on these my men and women, 140
Take and keep my fifty poems finished;
Where my heart lies, let my brain lie also!
Poor the speech; be how I speak, for all things.

Not but that you know me! Lo, the moon's self!
Here in London, yonder late in Florence,
Still we find her face, the thrice-transfigured. 146
Curving on a sky imbrued with color,
Drifted over Fiesole by twilight,
Came she, our new crescent of a hair's-breadth.
Full she flared it, lamping Samminiato,
Rounder 'twixt the cypresses and rounder, 151
Perfect till the nightingales applauded.
Now, a piece of her old self, impoverished,
Hard to greet, she traverses the house-roofs,
Hurries with unhandsome thrift of silver, 155
Goes dispiritedly, glad to finish.

What, there's nothing in the moon noteworthy?
Nay; for if that moon could love a mortal,
Use, to charm him (so to fit a fancy),
All her magic ('tis the old sweet mythos), 160
She would turn a new side to her mortal,
Side unseen of herdsman, huntsman, steersman—
Blank to Zoroaster on his terrace,
Blind to Galileo on his turret,
Dumb to Homer, dumb to Keats—him, even. 165
Think, the wonder of the moonstruck mortal—
When she turns round, comes again in heaven,
Opens out anew for worse or better!
Proves she like some portent of an iceberg
Swimming full upon the ship it founders,
Hungry with huge teeth of splintered crystals? 171
Proves she as the paved work of a sapphire
Seen by Moses when he climbed the mountain?
Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu
Climbed and saw the very God, the Highest, 175
Stand upon the paved work of a sapphire.
Like the bodied heaven in his clearness
Shone the stone, the sapphire of that paved work,
When they ate and drank and saw God also!

What were seen? None knows, none ever shall know. 180
Only this is sure—the sight were other,
Not the moon's same side, born late in Florence,

125. **missal-marge.** The edges of the pages of Books of Devotions or Hours were often beautifully illuminated. 136, 138. **Karshish,** etc., characters in *Men and Women.* 148. **Fiesole,** a hill town which is almost a suburb of Florence. 150. **Samminiato,** San Miniato, a church in Florence.

160. **mythos,** myth. 163. **Zoroaster** (c. 1000 B.C.), founder of the Persian religion. He stressed the value of astronomy. 164. **Galileo** (1564-1642), inventor of the telescope, and one of the first to observe some of the principles upon which modern astronomy is based. 174. **Moses,** etc., Exodus xxiv, 1, 10.

Dying now impoverished here in London.
God be thanked, the meanest of his creatures
Boasts two soul-sides, one to face the world with, 185
One to show a woman when he loves her!

This I say of me, but think of you, Love!
This to you—yourself my moon of poets!
Ah, but that's the world's side, there's the wonder,
Thus they see you, praise you, think they know you! 190
There, in turn I stand with them and praise you—
Out of my own self, I dare to phrase it.
But the best is when I glide from out them,
Cross a step or two of dubious twilight,
Come out on the other side, the novel 195
Silent silver lights and darks undreamed of,
Where I hush and bless myself with silence.

Oh, their Rafael of the dear Madonnas,
Oh, their Dante of the dread Inferno,
Wrote one song—and in my brain I sing it, 200
Drew one angel—borne, see, on my bosom!
—R. B.
(1855)

RABBI BEN EZRA

Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made.
Our times are in his hand
Who saith, "A whole I planned; 5
Youth shows but half. Trust God; see all, nor be afraid!"

Not that, amassing flowers,
Youth sighed, "Which rose make ours,
Which lily leave and then as best recall?"
Not that, admiring stars, 10
It yearned, "Nor Jove, nor Mars;
Mine be some figured flame which blends, transcends them all!"

Not for such hopes and fears
Annulling youth's brief years,
Do I remonstrate; folly wide the mark!
Rather I prize the doubt 16
Low kinds exist without,
Finished and finite clods, untroubled by a spark.

Poor vaunt of life indeed,
Were man but formed to feed 20
On joy, to solely seek and find and feast.
Such feasting ended, then
As sure an end to men;
Irks care the crop-full bird? Frets doubt the maw-crammed beast?

Rejoice we are allied 25
To that which doth provide
And not partake, effect and not receive!
A spark disturbs our clod;
Nearer we hold of God
Who gives, than of his tribes that take, I must believe. 30

Then, welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!
Be our joys three-parts pain!
Strive, and hold cheap the strain; 35
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge the throe!

For thence—a paradox
Which comforts while it mocks—
Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail.
What I aspired to be, 40
And was not, comforts me;
A brute I might have been, but would not sink i' the scale.

What is he but a brute
Whose flesh has soul to suit,
Whose spirit works lest arms and legs want play? 45

Rabbi Ben Ezra. Browning did not copy the poems or the thoughts of this famous medieval rabbi, but used him as the mouthpiece for his own philosophy of the aspiration and development of human beings in understanding God. Cf. "Immortality" (page 581) and "On Growing Old" (page 624).

To man, propose this test—
Thy body at its best,
How far can that project thy soul on its lone way?

Yet gifts should prove their use.
I own the Past profuse 50
Of power each side, perfection every turn;
Eyes, ears took in their dole,
Brain treasured up the whole;
Should not the heart beat once "How good to live and learn!"

Not once beat "Praise be thine! 55
I see the whole design,
I, who saw power, see now love perfect too.
Perfect I call thy plan;
Thanks that I was a man!
Maker, remake, complete—I trust what thou shalt do"? 60

For pleasant is this flesh;
Our soul, in its rose-mesh
Pulled ever to the earth, still yearns for rest.
Would we some prize might hold
To match those manifold 65
Possessions of the brute—gain most, as we did best!

Let us not always say,
"Spite of this flesh today
I strove, made head, gained ground upon the whole!"
As the bird wings and sings, 70
Let us cry, "All good things
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul!"

Therefore I summon age
To grant youth's heritage,
Life's struggle having so far reached its term. 75
Thence shall I pass, approved
A man, for aye removed
From the developed brute; a god, though in the germ.

And I shall thereupon
Take rest, ere I be gone 80
Once more on my adventure brave and new;
Fearless and unperplexed,
When I wage battle next,
What weapons to select, what armor to indue.

Youth ended, I shall try 85
My gain or loss thereby;
Leave the fire ashes, what survives is gold.
And I shall weigh the same,
Give life its praise or blame.
Young, all lay in dispute; I shall know, being old. 90

For note, when evening shuts,
A certain moment cuts
The deed off, calls the glory from the gray.
A whisper from the west
Shoots—"Add this to the rest, 95
Take it and try its worth. Here dies another day."

So, still within this life,
Though lifted o'er its strife,
Let me discern, compare, pronounce at last,
"This rage was right i' the main, 100
That acquiescence vain;
The Future I may face now I have proved the Past."

For more is not reserved
To man, with soul just nerved
To act tomorrow what he learns today.
Here, work enough to watch 106
The Master work, and catch
Hints of the proper craft, tricks of the tool's true play.

As it was better, youth
Should strive, through acts uncouth, 110
Toward making, than repose on aught found made:
So, better, age, exempt
From strife, should know, than tempt
Further. Thou waitedst age; wait death nor be afraid!

Enough now, if the Right 115
And Good and Infinite
Be named here, as thou callest thy hand thine own,
With knowledge absolute,

Subject to no dispute
From fools that crowded youth, nor let thee feel alone. 120

Be there, for once and all,
Severed great minds from small,
Announced to each his station in the Past!
Was I, the world arraigned,
Were they, my soul disdained, 125
Right? Let age speak the truth and give us peace at last!

Now, who shall arbitrate?
Ten men love what I hate,
Shun what I follow, slight what I receive;
Ten, who in ears and eyes 130
Match me. We all surmise,
They this thing, and I that; whom shall my soul believe?

Not on the vulgar mass
Called "work," must sentence pass,
Things done, that took the eye and had the price; 135
O'er which, from level stand,
The low world laid its hand,
Found straightway to its mind, could value in a trice.

But all, the world's coarse thumb
And finger failed to plumb, 140
So passed in making up the main account;
All instincts immature,
All purposes unsure,
That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's amount:

Thoughts hardly to be packed 145
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped;
All I could never be,
All, men ignored in me,
This I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped. 150

Aye, note that Potter's wheel,
That metaphor! and feel
Why time spins fast, why passive lies our clay—
Thou, to whom fools propound,
When the wine makes its round, 155
"Since life fleets, all is change; the Past gone, seize today!"

Fool! All that is, at all,
Lasts ever, past recall;
Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure.
What entered into thee, 160
That was, is, and shall be.
Time's wheel runs back or stops; Potter and clay endure.

He fixed thee 'mid this dance
Of plastic circumstance;
This Present, thou, forsooth, wouldst fain arrest; 165
Machinery just meant
To give thy soul its bent,
Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently impressed.

What though the earlier grooves,
Which ran the laughing loves 170
Around thy base, no longer pause and press?
What though, about thy rim,
Skull-things in order grim
Grow out, in graver mood, obey the sterner stress?

Look not thou down but up! 175
To uses of a cup,
The festal board, lamp's flash, and trumpet's peal,
The new wine's foaming flow,
The Master's lips aglow!
Thou, heaven's consummate cup, what needst thou with earth's wheel? 180

But I need, now as then,
Thee, God, who moldest men;
And since, not even while the whirl was worst,
Did I—to the wheel of life
With shapes and colors rife, 185
Bound dizzily—mistake my end, to slake thy thirst.

So, take and use thy work;
Amend what flaws may lurk,
What strain o' the stuff, what warpings past the aim!
My times be in thy hand! 190
Perfect the cup as planned!
Let age approve of youth, and death complete the same! (1864)

CALIBAN UPON SETEBOS

OR, NATURAL THEOLOGY IN THE ISLAND

"Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself."

['Will sprawl, now that the heat of day is best,
Flat on his belly in the pit's much mire,
With elbows wide, fists clenched to prop his chin.
And, while he kicks both feet in the cool slush,
And feels about his spine small eft-things course, 5
Run in and out each arm, and make him laugh;
And while above his head a pompion-plant,
Coating the cave-top as a brow its eye,
Creeps down to touch and tickle hair and beard,
And now a flower drops with a bee inside, 10
And now a fruit to snap at, catch and crunch—
He looks out o'er yon sea which sunbeams cross
And recross till they weave a spider-web
(Meshes of fire, some great fish breaks at times),
And talks to his own self, howe'er he please, 15
Touching that other, whom his dam called God.
Because to talk about Him, vexes—ha,
Could He but know! and time to vex is now,
When talk is safer than in winter-time.
Moreover Prosper and Miranda sleep; 20
In confidence he drudges at their task,
And it is good to cheat the pair, and gibe,
Letting the rank tongue blossom into speech.]
Setebos, Setebos, and Setebos!
'Thinketh, He dwelleth i' the cold o' the moon. 25

'Thinketh He made it, with the sun to match,
But not the stars; the stars came otherwise;
Only made clouds, winds, meteors, such as that;
Also this isle, what lives and grows thereon,
And snaky sea which rounds and ends the same. 30

'Thinketh, it came of being ill at ease.
He hated that He cannot change His cold,
Nor cure its ache. 'Hath spied an icy fish
That longed to 'scape the rock-stream where she lived,
And thaw herself within the lukewarm brine 35
O' the lazy sea her stream thrusts far amid,
A crystal spike 'twixt two warm walls of wave;
Only, she ever sickened, found repulse
At the other kind of water, not her life.
(Green-dense and dim-delicious, bred o' the sun), 40
Flounced back from bliss she was not born to breathe,
And in her old bounds buried her despair,
Hating and loving warmth alike; so He.

'Thinketh, He made thereat the sun, this isle,
Trees and the fowls here, beast and creeping thing. 45
Yon otter, sleek-wet, black, lithe as a leech;
Yon auk, one fire-eye in a ball of foam,
That floats and feeds; a certain badger brown
He hath watched hunt with that slant white-wedge eye
By moonlight; and the pie with the long tongue 50
That pricks deep into oakwarts for a worm,
And says a plain word when she finds her prize,
But will not eat the ants; the ants themselves

Caliban upon Setebos. The poem is based upon Shakespeare's *The Tempest.* Caliban here gives his brute impressions about his god, Setebos. Browning uses the third person throughout, in accord with a philological theory that this person was the first to develop in speech. Setebos is both the name of the island and of Caliban's giant god. 7. **pompion-plant,** pumpkin or gourd. 16. **his dam,** the witch Sycorax.

50. **pie,** magpie.

That build a wall of seeds and settled stalks
About their hole—He made all these and more, 55
Made all we see, and us, in spite; how else?
He could not, Himself, make a second self
To be His mate; as well have made Himself.
He would not make what He mislikes or slights,
An eyesore to Him, or not worth His pains; 60
But did, in envy, listlessness or sport,
Make what Himself would fain, in a manner, be—
Weaker in most points, stronger in a few,
Worthy, and yet mere playthings all the while,
Things He admires and mocks, too—that is it. 65
Because, so brave, so better though they be,
It nothing skills if He begin to plague.
Look now, I melt a gourd-fruit into mash,
Add honeycomb and pods, I have perceived,
Which bite like finches when they bill and kiss— 70
Then, when froth rises bladdery, drink up all,
Quick, quick, till maggots scamper through my brain;
Last, throw me on my back i' the seeded thyme,
And wanton, wishing I were born a bird.
Put case, unable to be what I wish, 75
I yet could make a live bird out of clay.
Would not I take clay, pinch my Caliban
Able to fly?—for, there, see, he hath wings,
And great comb like the hoopoe's to admire,
And there, a sting to do his foes offense,
There, and I will that he begin to live, 81
Fly to yon rock-top, nip me off the horns
Of grigs high up that make the merry din
Saucy through their veined wings, and mind me not.

In which feat, if his leg snapped, brittle clay, 85
And he lay stupid-like—why I should laugh;
And if he, spying me should fall to weep,
Beseech me to be good, repair his wrong,
Bid his poor leg smart less or grow again—
Well, as the chance were this might take or else 90
Not take my fancy, I might hear his cry
And give the manikin three sound legs for one,
Or pluck the other off, leave him like an egg,
And lessoned he was mine and merely clay.
Were this no pleasure lying in the thyme, 95
Drinking the mash, with brain become alive
Making and marring clay at will? So He.

'Thinketh such shows nor right nor wrong in Him,
Nor kind nor cruel; He is strong and Lord.
'Am strong myself compared to yonder crabs 100
That march now from the mountain to the sea;
'Let twenty pass and stone the twenty-first,
Loving not, hating not, just choosing so.
'Say, the first straggler that boasts purple spots
Shall join the file, one pincer twisted off; 105
'Say this bruised fellow shall receive a worm,
And two worms he whose nippers end in red;
As it likes me each time I do: so He.

Well then, 'supposeth He is good i' the main,
Placable if His mind and ways were guessed, 110
But rougher than His handiwork, be sure!
Oh, He hath made things worthier than Himself,
And envieth that, so helped, such things do more

79. **hoopoe**, a crested bird somewhat like a blue jay.
83. **grigs**, grasshoppers.

Than He who made them! What consoles but this?
That they, unless through Him, do naught at all, 115
And must submit; what other use in things?
'Hath cut a pipe of pithless elder-joint
That, blown through, gives exact the scream o' the jay
When from her wing you twitch the feathers blue.
Sound this, and little birds that hate the jay 120
Flock within stone's throw, glad their foe is hurt.
Put case such pipe could prattle and boast forsooth,
"I catch the birds, I am the crafty thing,
I make the cry my maker cannot make
With his great round mouth; he must blow through mine!" 125
Would not I smash it with my foot? So He.

But wherefore rough, why cold and ill at ease?
Aha, that is a question! Ask, for that,
What knows—the something over Setebos
That made Him, or He maybe, found and fought, 130
Worsted, drove off and did to nothing, perchance.
There may be something quiet o'er His head,
Out of His reach, that feels nor joy nor grief,
Since both derive from weakness in some way.
I joy because the quails come; would not joy 135
Could I bring quails here when I have a mind.
This Quiet, all it hath a mind to, doth.
'Esteemeth stars the outposts of its couch,
But never spends much thought nor care that way.
It may look up, work up—the worse for those 140
It works on! 'Careth but for Setebos
The many-handed as a cuttle-fish,
Who, making Himself feared through what He does,
Looks up, first, and perceives he cannot soar
To what is quiet and hath happy life;
Next looks down here, and out of very spite 146
Makes this a bauble-world to ape yon real,
These good things to match those as hips do grapes.
'Tis solace making baubles, aye, and sport.
Himself peeped late, eyed Prosper at his books 150
Careless and lofty, lord now of the isle;
Vexed, 'stitched a book of broad leaves, arrow-shaped,
Wrote thereon, he knows what, prodigious words;
Has peeled a wand and called it by a name;
Weareth at whiles for an enchanter's robe 155
The eyed skin of a supple oncelot;
And hath an ounce sleeker than young-ling mole,
A four-legged serpent he makes cower and couch,
Now snarl, now hold its breath and mind his eye,
And saith she is Miranda and my wife.
'Keeps for his Ariel a tall pouch-bill crane 161
He bids go wade for fish and straight disgorge;
Also a sea-beast, lumpish, which he snared,
Blinded the eyes of, and brought somewhat tame,
And split its toe-webs, and now pens the drudge 165
In a hole o' the rock, and calls him Caliban;
A bitter heart that bides its time and bites.
'Plays thus at being Prosper in a way.
Taketh his mirth with make-believes; so He.

His dam held that the Quiet made all things 170

148. **hip**, the ripened fruit of the rose. 156. **oncelot**, ocelot, a large and fierce member of the cat family. 157. **ounce**, leopard. 170. **dam**, Sycorax.

Which Setebos vexed only; 'holds not so.
Who made them weak, meant weakness He might vex.
Had He meant other, while His hand was in,
Why not make horny eyes no thorn could prick,
Or plate my scalp with bone against the snow, 175
Or overscale my flesh 'neath joint and joint
Like an orc's armor? Aye—so spoil His sport!
He is the One now; only He doth all.

'Saith, He may like, perchance, what profits him.
Aye, himself loves what does him good; but why? 180
'Gets good no otherwise. This blinded beast
Loves whoso places flesh-meat on his nose,
But, had he eyes, would want no help, but hate
Or love, just as it liked him; he hath eyes.
Also it pleaseth Setebos to work, 185
Use all His hands, and exercise much craft,
By no means for the love of what is worked.

'Tasteth himself, no finer good i' the world
When all goes right, in this safe summer-time,
And he wants little, hungers, aches not much, 190
Than trying what to do with wit and strength.
'Falls to make something; 'piled yon pile of turfs,
And squared and stuck there squares of soft white chalk,
And, with a fish-tooth, scratched a moon on each,
And set up endwise certain spikes of tree, 195
And crowned the whole with a sloth's skull atop,
Found dead i' the woods, too hard for one to kill.
No use at all i' the work, for work's sole sake;
'Shall some day knock it down again: so He.

'Saith He is terrible; watch His feats in proof! 200
One hurricane will spoil six good months' hope.
He hath a spite against me, that I know,
Just as He favors Prosper, who knows why?
So it is, all the same, as well I find.
'Wove wattles half the winter, fenced them firm 205
With stone and stake to stop she-tortoises
Crawling to lay their eggs here. Well, one wave,
Feeling the foot of Him upon its neck,
Gaped as a snake does, lolled out its large tongue,
And licked the whole labor flat; so much for spite. 210

'Saw a ball flame down late (yonder it lies)
Where half an hour before, I slept i' the shade.
Often they scatter sparkles; there is force!
'Dug up a newt He may have envied once
And turned to stone, shut up inside a stone. 215
Please Him and hinder this?—What Prosper does?
Aha, if He would tell me how! Not He!
There is the sport; discover how or die!
All need not die, for of the things o' the isle
Some flee afar, some dive, some run up trees; 220
Those at His mercy—why they please Him most
When . . . when . . . well, never try the same way twice!
Repeat what act has pleased, He may grow wroth.
You must not know His ways, and play Him off,
Sure of the issue. Doth the like himself: 225

177. orc, grampus.

'Spareth a squirrel that it nothing fears
But steals the nut from underneath my thumb,
And when I threat, bites stoutly in defense.
'Spareth an urchin that contrariwise,
Curls up into a ball, pretending death 230
For fright at my approach; the two ways please.
But what would move my choler more than this,
That either creature counted on its life
Tomorrow and next day and all days to come
Saying, forsooth, in the inmost of its heart, 235
"Because he did so yesterday with me,
And otherwise with such another brute,
So must he do henceforth and always."—Aye?
Would teach the reasoning couple what "must" means!
'Doth as he likes, or wherefore Lord? So He. 240

'Conceiveth all things will continue thus,
And we shall have to live in fear of Him
So long as He lives, keeps his strength; no change,
If He have done His best, make no new world
To please Him more, so leave off watching this— 245
If He surprise not even the Quiet's self
Some strange day—or, suppose, grow into it
As grubs grow butterflies. Else, here we are,
And there is He, and nowhere help at all.

'Believeth with the life, the pain shall stop. 250
His dam held different, that after death
He both plagued enemies and feasted friends:
Idly! He doth His worst in this our life.
Giving just respite lest we die through pain,
Saving last pain for worst—with which, an end. 255
Meanwhile, the best way to escape His ire
Is, not to seem too happy. 'Sees, himself,
Yonder two flies, with purple films and pink,
Bask on the pompion-bell above; kills both.
'Sees two black painful beetles roll their ball 260
On head and tail as if to save their lives;
Moves them the stick away they strive to clear.

Even so,'would have him misconceive, suppose
This Caliban strives hard and ails no less,
And always, above all else, envies Him; 265
Wherefore he mainly dances on dark nights,
Moans in the sun, gets under holes to laugh,
And never speaks his mind save housed as now.
Outside, 'groans, curses. If He caught me here,
O'erheard this speech, and asked "What chucklest at?" 270
'Would, to appease Him, cut a finger off,
Or of my three kid yearlings burn the best,
Or let the toothsome apples rot on tree,
Or push my tame beast for the orc to taste;
While myself lit a fire, and made a song, 275
And sung it, "*What I hate, be consecrate,*
To celebrate Thee and Thy state, no mate
For Thee; what see for envy in poor me?"
Hoping the while, since evils sometimes mend,
Warts rub away and sores are cured with slime, 280
That some strange day, will either the Quiet catch
And conquer Setebos, or likelier He
Decrepit may doze, doze, as good as die.

[What, what? A curtain o'er the world at once!

Crickets stop hissing; not a bird—or, yes,
There scuds His raven that has told Him all!
It was fool's play, this prattling! Ha! The wind
Shoulders the pillared dust, death's house o' the move,
And fast invading fires begin! White blaze—
A tree's head snaps—and there, there, there, there, there,
His thunder follows! Fool to gibe at Him!
Lo! 'Lieth flat and loveth Setebos!
'Maketh his teeth meet through his upper lip,
Will let those quails fly, will not eat this month
One little mess of whelks, so he may 'scape!] (1864)

CONFESSIONS

What is he buzzing in my ears?
"Now that I come to die,
Do I view the world as a vale of tears?"
Ah, reverend sir, not I!

What I viewed there once, what I view again
Where the physic bottles stand
On the table's edge—is a suburb lane,
With a wall to my bedside hand.

That lane sloped, much as the bottles do,
From a house you could descry
O'er the garden-wall; is the curtain blue
Or green to a healthy eye?

To mine, it serves for the old June weather
Blue above lane and wall;
And that farthest bottle labeled "Ether"
Is the house o'ertopping all.

At a terrace, somewhere near the stopper,
There watched for me, one June,
A girl. I know, sir, it's improper;
My poor mind's out of tune.

Only, there was a way . . . you crept
Close by the side, to dodge
Eyes in the house, two eyes except;
They styled their house "The Lodge."

What right had a lounger up their lane?
But, by creeping very close,
With the good wall's help—their eyes might strain
And stretch themselves to O's,

Yet never catch her and me together,
As she left the attic, there,
By the rim of the bottle labeled "Ether,"
And stole from stair to stair,

And stood by the rose-wreathed gate. Alas,
We loved, sir—used to meet.
How sad and bad and mad it was—
But, then, how it was sweet! (1864)

PROSPICE

Fear death?—to feel the fog in my throat,
The mist in my face,
When the snows begin, and the blasts denote
I am nearing the place,
The power of the night, the press of the storm,
The post of the foe;
Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible form,
Yet the strong man must go;
For the journey is done and the summit attained,
And the barriers fall,
Though a battle's to fight ere the guerdon be gained,
The reward of it all.
I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,
The best and the last!
I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and forbore,
And bade me creep past.
No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers,

Prospice. The word *prospice* is the Latin for "look forward." We have referred to this poem frequently in connection with earlier lyric poems. Contrast it now with later poems: "Uphill" (page 590), "Dominus Illuminatio Mea" (page 590), "Say Not the Struggle Naught Availeth" (page 570), and "Thanatopsis" (page 634).

The heroes of old,
Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears
Of pain, darkness, and cold. 20
For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,
The black minute's at end,
And the element's rage, the fiend-voices that rave,
Shall dwindle, shall blend,
Shall change, shall become first a peace out of pain, 25
Then a light, then thy breast,
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,
And with God be the rest! (1864)

From THE DEDICATION to THE RING AND THE BOOK

(END OF BOOK I)

O lyric Love, half angel and half bird,
And all a wonder and a wild desire—
Boldest of hearts that ever braved the sun,
Took sanctuary within the holier blue,
And sang a kindred soul out to his face— 5
Yet human at the red-ripe of the heart—
When the first summons from the darkling earth
Reached thee amid thy chambers, blanched their blue,
And bared them of the glory—to drop down,
To toil for man, to suffer or to die— 10
This is the same voice. Can thy soul know change?
Hail then, and harken from the realms of help!
Never may I commence my song, my due
To God who best taught song by gift of thee,
Except with bent head and beseeching hand— 15
That still, despite the distance and the dark,
What was, again may be; some interchange
Of grace, some splendor once thy very thought,
Some benediction anciently thy smile:
—Never conclude, but raising hand and head 20
Thither where eyes, that cannot reach, yet yearn
For all hope, all sustainment, all reward,
Their utmost up and on—so blessing back
In those thy realms of help, that heaven thy home,
Some whiteness which, I judge, thy face makes proud, 25
Some wanness where, I think, thy foot may fall! (1868)

The Ring and the Book. Mrs. Browning died in 1861. In 1868 Browning finished *The Ring and the Book,* and dedicated it to her. Cf. "The Blessed Damozel" (page 587).

HOUSE

Shall I sonnet-sing you about myself?
Do I live in a house you would like to see?
Is it scant of gear, has it store of pelf?
"Unlock my heart with a sonnet-key?"

Invite the world, as my betters have done? 5
"Take notice: this building remains on view,
Its suites of reception every one,
Its private apartment and bedroom, too;

"For a ticket, apply to the Publisher."
No; thanking the public, I must decline. 10
A peep through my window, if folk prefer;
But, please you, no foot over threshold of mine!

I have mixed with a crowd and heard free talk
In a foreign land where an earthquake chanced
And a house stood gaping, naught to balk 15
Man's eye wherever he gazed or glanced.
The whole of the frontage shaven sheer,
The inside gaped; exposed to day,

Right and wrong and common and queer,
Bare, as the palm of your hand, it lay. 20

The owner? Oh, he had been crushed, no doubt!
"Odd tables and chairs for a man of wealth!
What a parcel of musty old books about!
He smoked—no wonder he lost his health!

"I doubt if he bathed before he dressed.
A brasier?—the pagan, he burned perfumes! 26
You see it is proved, what the neighbors guessed:
His wife and himself had separate rooms."

Friends, the good man of the house at least
Kept house to himself till an earthquake came. 30
'Tis the fall of its frontage permits you feast
On the inside arrangement you praise or blame.

Outside should suffice for evidence;
And whoso desires to penetrate
Deeper, must dive by the spirit-sense—
No optics like yours, at any rate! 36

"Hoity-toity! A street to explore,
Your house the exception! '*With this same key*
Shakespeare unlocked his heart!' "—
Once more,
Did Shakespeare? If so, the less Shakespeare he! (1876)

PROLOGUE TO LA SAISIAZ

Good, to forgive;
Best, to forget!
Living, we fret;
Dying, we live.

Fretless and free, 5
Soul, clap thy pinion,
Earth have dominion,
Body, o'er thee!

Wander at will,
Day after day, 10
Wander away,
Wandering still—
Soul that canst soar!
Body may slumber;
Body shall cumber 15
Soul-flight no more.

Waft of soul's wing!
What lies above?
Sunshine and Love
Skyblue and Spring! 20
Body hides—where?
Ferns of all feather,
Mosses and heather,
Yours be the care!

(1878)

SUMMUM BONUM

All the breath and the bloom of the year in the bag of one bee;
All the wonder and wealth of the mine in the heart of one gem;
In the core of one pearl all the shade and the shine of the sea:
Breath and bloom, shade and shine—wonder, wealth, and — how far above them—
Truth, that's brighter than gem, 5
Trust, that's purer than pearl—
Brightest truth, purest trust in the universe—all were for me
In the kiss of one girl.

(1890)

A PEARL, A GIRL

A simple ring with a single stone,
To the vulgar eye no stone of price;
Whisper the right word, that alone—
Forth starts a sprite, like fire from ice,
And lo, you are lord (says an Eastern scroll) 5
Of heaven and earth, lord whole and sole
Through the power in a pearl.

38-39. The quotation is from Wordsworth's sonnet "Scorn Not the Sonnet."

Prologue to La Saisiaz. A poem on immortality. Browning wrote it after the death of his friend, Miss Egerton-Smith, at La Saisiaz in Switzerland, 1877.

A woman ('tis I this time that say)
With little the world counts worthy praise;
Utter the true word—out and away 10
Escapes her soul; I am wrapt in blaze,
Creation's lord, of heaven and earth
Lord whole and sole—by a minute's birth—
Through the love in a girl!

(1890)

EPILOGUE TO ASOLANDO

At the midnight in the silence of the sleep-time,
When you set your fancies free,
Will they pass to where—by death, fools think, imprisoned—
Low he lies who once so loved you, whom you loved so,
—Pity me? 5

Oh, to love so, be so loved, yet so mistaken!
What had I on earth to do
With the slothful, with the mawkish, the unmanly?
Like the aimless, helpless, hopeless, did I drivel!
—Being—who? 10

One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake. 15

No, at noonday in the bustle of man's work-time
Greet the unseen with a cheer!
Bid him forward, breast and back as either should be,
"Strive and thrive!" cry "Speed—fight on, fare ever
There as here!"

(1890)

Epilogue to Asolando. This was Browning's last poem. When he read the proofs to his sister and daughter-in-law he said, "It almost looks like bragging to say this, and as if I ought to cancel it; but it's the simple truth; and as it's true, it shall stand." Contrast this poem with "Invictus" (page 600).

*ARTHUR WILLIAM EDGAR O'SHAUGHNESSY (1844-1881)

ODE

We are the music-makers,
And we are the dreamers of dreams,
Wandering by lone sea-breakers,
And sitting by desolate streams;
World-losers and world-forsakers, 5
On whom the pale moon gleams.
Yet we are the movers and shakers
Of the world forever, it seems.

With wonderful deathless ditties
We build up the world's great cities, 10
And out of a fabulous story
We fashion an empire's glory.
One man with a dream, at pleasure,
Shall go forth and conquer a crown;
And three with a new song's measure 15
Can trample an empire down.

We, in the ages lying
In the buried past of the earth,
Built Nineveh with our sighing,
And Babel itself with our mirth; 20
And o'erthrew them with prophesying
To the old of the new world's worth;
For each age is a dream that is dying,
Or one that is coming to birth.

(1874)

SONG

Has summer come without the rose,
Or left the bird behind?
Is the blue changed above thee,
O world! or am I blind?
Will you change every flower that grows,
Or only change this spot, 6
Where she who said, I love thee,
Now says, I love thee not?

The skies seemed true above thee,
The rose true on the tree; 10
The bird seemed true the summer through,
But all proved false to me.

*An English poet of Irish descent.
Ode. Cf. "The Poet" (page 521).
Song. Contrast the tone of modern poems on disappointed youth with those of the Elizabethan or Cavalier poets, "Since There's No Help" (page 360) and "Why So Pale and Wan, Fond Lover?" (page 387). In such poems today, there is a note of romantic emotion which the Cavalier poets lacked. Cf. the poems of A. E. Housman (page 617) and Arthur Symons (page 624).

World! is there one good thing in you,
  Life, love, or death—or what?
Since lips that sang, I love thee, 15
  Have said, I love thee not?

I think the sun's kiss will scarce fall
  Into one flower's gold cup;
I think the bird will miss me,
  And give the summer up. 20
O sweet place! desolate in tall
  Wild grass, have you forgot
How her lips loved to kiss me,
  Now that they kiss me not?

Be false or fair above me, 25
  Come back with any face,
Summer!—do I care what you do?
  You cannot change one place—
The grass, the leaves, the earth, the dew,
  The grave I make the spot— 30
Here, where she used to love me,
  Here, where she loves me not.

(1874)

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH
(1819-1861)

SAY NOT THE STRUGGLE NAUGHT AVAILETH

Say not the struggle naught availeth,
  The labor and the wounds are vain,
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
  And as things have been they remain.

If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars;
  It may be, in yon smoke concealed, 6
Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,
  And, but for you, possess the field.

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
  Seem here no painful inch to gain, 10
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
  Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

And not by eastern windows only,
  When daylight comes, comes in the light;
In front the sun climbs slow, how slowly!
  But westward, look, the land is bright!

(1862)

Say Not the Struggle Naught Availeth. Cf. "Reveille" (page 703).

HOPE EVERMORE AND BELIEVE

Hope evermore and believe, O man, for e'en as thy thought,
  So are the things that thou see'st; e'en as thy hope and belief.
Cowardly art thou and timid? they rise to provoke thee against them;
  Hast thou courage? enough, see them exulting to yield.
Yea, the rough rock, the dull earth, the wild sea's furying waters 5
  (Violent say'st thou and hard, mighty thou think'st to destroy),
All with ineffable longing are waiting their Invader,
  All, with one varying voice, call to him, Come and subdue;
Still for their Conqueror call, and but for the joy of being conquered
  (Rapture they will not forego), dare to resist and rebel; 10
Still, when resisting and raging, in soft undervoice say unto him,
  Fear not, retire not, O man; hope evermore and believe.

Go from the east to the west, as the sun and the stars direct thee.
  Go with the girdle of man, go and encompass the earth.
Not for the gain of the gold; for the getting, the hoarding, the having, 15
  But for the joy of the deed; but for the Duty to do.
Go with the spiritual life, the higher volition and action,
  With the great girdle of God, go and encompass the earth.
Go; say not in thy heart, And what then were it accomplished,
  Were the wild impulse allayed, what were the use or the good! 20
Go, when the instinct is stilled, and when the deed is accomplished,
  What thou hast done and shalt do, shall be declared to thee then.
Go with the sun and the stars, and yet evermore in thy spirit
  Say to thyself: It is good; yet is there better than it.

This that I see is not all, and this that
I do is but little; 25
Nevertheless it is good, though there
is better than it. (1862)

IT FORTIFIES MY SOUL

It fortifies my soul to know
That, though I perish, Truth is so;
That, howsoe'er I stray and range,
Whate'er I do, Thou dost not change.
I steadier step when I recall 5
That, if I slip, Thou dost not fall.
(1862)

*GEORGE MEREDITH
(1828-1909)

LOVE IN THE VALLEY

Under yonder beech-tree single on the
greensward,
Couched with her arms behind her
golden head,
Knees and tresses folded to slip and
ripple idly,
Lies my young love sleeping in the
shade.
Had I the heart to slide an arm beneath
her, 5
Press her parting lips as her waist I
gather slow,
Waking in amazement she could not but
embrace me—
Then would she hold me and never
let me go?

Shy as the squirrel and wayward as
the swallow,
Swift as the swallow along the river's
light 10
Circleting the surface to meet his mirrored winglets,
Fleeter she seems in her stay than in
her flight.
Shy as the squirrel that leaps among the
pine-tops,
Wayward as the swallow overhead
at set of sun,
She whom I love is hard to catch and
conquer, 15
Hard, but O the glory of the winning
were she won!

When her mother tends her before the
laughing mirror,
Tying up her laces, looping up her
hair,
Often she thinks, were this wild thing
wedded,
More love should I have, and much
less care. 20
When her mother tends her before the
lighted mirror,
Loosening her laces, combing down
her curls,
Often she thinks, were this wild thing
wedded,
I should miss but one for many boys
and girls.

Heartless she is as the shadow in the
meadows 25
Flying to the hills on a blue and
breezy noon.
No, she is athirst and drinking up her
wonder;
Earth to her is young as the slip of
the new moon.
Deals she an unkindness, 'tis but her
rapid measure,
Even as in a dance; and her smile can
heal no less: 30
Like the swinging May-cloud that pelts
the flowers with hailstones
Off a sunny border, she was made to
bruise and bless.

Lovely are the curves of the white owl
sweeping
Wavy in the dusk lit by one large
star.

It Fortifies My Soul. Another reply to the philosophy expressed in "Invictus" (page 600). Cf. "Dominus Illuminatio Mea" (page 590).

*It has often been said that Meredith was a novelist who should have been a poet. "Modern Love" (page 575) for instance, a lyric sequence about a pair of lovers whose love was shattered, is suitable in plot and treatment for a psychological novel. The selection here given is the reflection of the man on the transiency of the world. Note the growing sophistication of such poems. On the other hand, "Love in the Valley" is filled with the joy of youth in love and nature such as Meredith depicted in *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*, while "Lucifer in Starlight" recognizes the eternal law of the universe, which is treated frequently in Meredith's novels. Cf. "She Was a Phantom of Delight" (page 461). Compare the descriptions of "Love in the Valley" with those of *Deirdre*.

Lone on the fir-branch, his rattle-note unvaried,
Brooding o'er the gloom, spins the brown evejar.
Darker grows the valley, more and more forgetting;
So were it with me if forgetting could be willed.
Tell the grassy hollow that holds the bubbling wellspring,
Tell it to forget the source that keeps it filled.

Stepping down the hill with her fair companions,
Arm in arm, all against the raying west,
Boldly she sings, to the merry tune she marches,
Brave is her shape, and sweeter unpossessed.
Sweeter, for she is what my heart first awaking
Whispered the world was; morning light is she.
Love that so desires would fain keep her changeless;
Fain would fling the net, and fain have her free.

Happy, happy time, when the white star hovers
Low over dim fields fresh with bloomy dew,
Near the face of dawn, that draws athwart the darkness,
Threading it with color, like yew-berries the yew.
Thicker crowd the shades as the grave east deepens
Glowing, and with crimson a long cloud swells.
Maiden still the morn is; and strange she is, and secret;
Strange her eyes; her cheeks are cold as cold sea-shells.

Sunrays, leaning on our southern hills and lighting
Wild cloud-mountains that drag the hills along,
Oft ends the day of your shifting brilliant laughter
Chill as a dull face frowning on a song.
Aye, but shows the southwest a ripple-feathered bosom
Blown to silver while the clouds are shaken and ascend
Scaling the mid-heavens as they stream, there comes a sunset
Rich, deep like love in beauty without end.

When at dawn she sighs, and like an infant to the window
Turns grave eyes craving light, released from dreams,
Beautiful she looks, like a white water-lily
Bursting out of bud in havens of the streams.
When from bed she rises clothed from neck to ankle
In her long nightgown sweet as boughs of May,
Beautiful she looks, like a tall garden-lily
Pure from the night, and splendid for the day.

Mother of the dews, dark-eyelashed twilight,
Low-lidded twilight, o'er the valley's brim,
Rounding on thy breast sings the dew-delighted skylark,
Clear as though the dewdrops had their voice in him.
Hidden where the rose-flush drinks the rayless planet,
Fountain-full he pours the spraying fountain-showers.
Let me hear her laughter, I would have her ever
Cool as dew in twilight, the lark above the flowers.

All the girls are out with their baskets for the primrose;
Up lanes, woods through, they troop in joyful bands.
My sweet leads. She knows not why, but now she loiters,

36. **evejar**, whip-poor-will.

Eyes the bent anemones, and hangs her hands.
Such a look will tell that the violets are peeping, 85
Coming the rose; and unaware a cry
Springs in her bosom for odors and for color,
Covert and the nightingale; she knows not why.

Kerchiefed head and chin she darts between her tulips,
Streaming like a willow gray in arrowy rain. 90
Some bend beaten cheek to gravel, and their angel
She will be; she lifts them, and on she speeds again.
Black the driving rain-cloud breasts the iron gateway;
She is forth to cheer a neighbor lacking mirth.
So when sky and grass met rolling dumb for thunder 95
Saw I once a white dove, sole light of earth.

Prim little scholars are the flowers of her garden,
Trained to stand in rows, and asking if they please.
I might love them well but for loving more the wild ones.
O my wild ones! they tell me more than these. 100
You, my wild one, you tell of honeyed field-rose,
Violet, blushing eglantine in life; and even as they,
They by the wayside are earnest of your goodness,
You are of life's, on the banks that line the way.

Peering at her chamber the white crowns the red rose, 105
Jasmine winds the porch with stars two and three.
Parted is the window; she sleeps; the starry jasmine
Breathes a falling breath that carries thoughts of me.

Sweeter unpossessed, have I said of her my sweetest?
Not while she sleeps. While she sleeps the jasmine breathes, 110
Luring her to love; she sleeps; the starry jasmine
Bears me to her pillow under white rose-wreaths.

Yellow with birdfoot-trefoil are the grass-glades;
Yellow with cinquefoil of the dew-gray leaf;
Yellow with stonecrop; the moss-mounds are yellow; 115
Blue-necked the wheat sways, yellowing to the sheaf.
Green-yellow, bursts from the copse the laughing yaffle;
Sharp as a sickle is the edge of shade and shine.
Earth in her heart laughs looking at the heavens,
Thinking of the harvest. I look and think of mine. 120

This I may know: her dressing and undressing
Such a change of light shows as when the skies in sport
Shift from cloud to moonlight; or edging over thunder
Slips a ray of sun; or sweeping into port
White sails furl; or on the ocean borders
White sails lean along the waves leaping green. 126
Visions of her shower before me, but from eyesight
Guarded she would be like the sun were she seen.

Front door and back of the mossed old farmhouse
Open with the morn, and in a breezy link 130
Freshly sparkles garden to stripe-shadowed orchard,
Green across a rill where on sand the minnows wink.

117. **yaffle**, woodpecker.

Busy in the grass the early sun of summer
Swarms, and the blackbird's mellow fluting notes
Call my darling up with round and roguish challenge; 135
Quaintest, richest carol of all the singing throats!

Cool was the woodside; cool as her white dairy
Keeping sweet the cream-pan; and there the boys from school,
Cricketing below, rushed brown and red with sunshine;
O the dark translucence of the deep-eyed cool! 140
Spying from the farm, herself she fetched a pitcher
Full of milk, and tilted for each in turn the beak.
Then a little fellow, mouth up and on tiptoe,
Said, "I will kiss you"; she laughed and leaned her cheek.

Doves of the firwood walling high our red roof 145
Through the long noon coo, crooning through the coo.
Loose droop the leaves, and down the sleepy roadway
Sometimes pipes a chaffinch; loose droops the blue.
Cows flap a slow tail knee-deep in the river,
Breathless, given up to sun and gnat and fly. 150
Nowhere is she seen; and if I see her nowhere,
Lightning may come, straight rains and tiger sky.

O the golden sheaf, the rustling treasure-armful!
O the nutbrown tresses nodding interlaced!
O the treasure-tresses one another over
Nodding! O the girdle slack about the waist! 156
Slain are the poppies that shot their random scarlet
Quick amid the wheat-ears. Wound about the waist,
Gathered, see these brides of Earth one blush of ripeness!
O the nutbrown tresses nodding interlaced! 160

Large and smoky red the sun's cold disk drops,
Clipped by naked hills, on violet-shaded snow.
Eastward large and still lights up a bower of moonrise,
Whence at her leisure steps the moon aglow.
Nightlong on black print-branches our beech-tree 165
Gazes in this whiteness; nightlong could I.
Here may life on death or death on life be painted.
Let me clasp her soul to know she cannot die!

Gossips count her faults; they scour a narrow chamber
Where there is no window, read not heaven or her. 170
"When she was a tiny," one aged woman quavers,
Plucks at my heart and leads me by the ear.
Faults she had once as she learned to run and tumbled;
Faults of feature some see, beauty not complete.
Yet, good gossips, beauty that makes holy 175
Earth and air, may have faults from head to feet.

Hither she comes; she comes to me; she lingers,
Deepens her brown eyebrows, while in new surprise
High rise the lashes in wonder of a stranger;
Yet am I the light and living of her eyes. 180
Something friends have told her fills her heart to brimming,
Nets her in her blushes, and wounds her, and tames.—

Sure of her haven, O like a dove alighting,
  Arms up, she dropped; our souls were in our names.

Soon will she lie like a white frost sunrise.
  Yellow oats and brown wheat, barley pale as rye,
Long since your sheaves have yielded to the thresher,
  Felt the girdle loosened, seen the tresses fly.
Soon will she lie like a blood-red sunset,
  Swift with the tomorrow, green-winged spring!
Sing from the southwest, bring her back the truants,
  Nightingale and swallow, song and dipping wing.

Soft new beech-leaves, up to beamy April
  Spreading bough on bough a primrose mountain, you
Lucid in the moon, raise lilies to the sky-fields,
  Youngest green transfused in silver shining through;
Fairer than the lily, than the wild white cherry;
  Fair as in image my seraph love appears
Borne to me by dreams when dawn is at my eyelids—
  Fair as in the flesh she swims to me on tears.

Could I find a place to be alone with heaven,
  I would speak my heart out; heaven is my need.
Every woodland tree is flushing like the dogwood,
  Flashing like the whitebeam, swaying like the reed.
Flushing like the dogwood crimson in October;
  Streaming like the flag-reed southwest blown;
Flashing as in gusts the sudden-lighted whitebeam:
  All seem to know what is for heaven alone. (1878)

LUCIFER IN STARLIGHT

On a starred night Prince Lucifer uprose.
  Tired of his dark dominion swung the fiend
  Above the rolling ball in cloud part screened,
Where sinners hugged their specter of repose.
Poor prey to his hot fit of pride were those.
  And now upon his western wing he leaned,
  Now his huge bulk o'er Afric's sands careened,
Now the black planet shadowed Arctic snows.
Soaring through wider zones that pricked his scars
  With memory of the old revolt from Awe,
He reached a middle height, and at the stars,
Which are the brain of heaven, he looked, and sank.
Around the ancient track marched, rank on rank,
  The army of unalterable law. (1883)

From MODERN LOVE

STANZA XIII

"I play for Seasons; not Eternities!"
Says Nature, laughing on her way. "So must
All those whose stake is nothing more than dust!"
And lo, she wins, and of her harmonies
She is full sure! Upon her dying rose
She drops a look of fondness, and goes by,
Scarce any retrospection in her eye;

For she the laws of growth most deeply knows,
Whose hands bear, here, a seed-bag—there, an urn.
Pledged she herself to aught, 'twould mark her end! 10
This lesson of our only visible friend,
Can we not teach our foolish hearts to learn?
Yes! yes!—but, oh, our human rose is fair
Surpassingly! Lose calmly Love's great bliss,
When the renewed forever of a kiss 15
Whirls life within the shower of loosened hair! (1862)

*MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822-1888)

SHAKESPEARE

Others abide our question. Thou art free.
We ask and ask—thou smilest and art still,
Out-topping knowledge. For the loftiest hill,
Who to the stars uncrowns his majesty,
Planting his steadfast footsteps in the sea, 5
Making the heaven of heavens his dwelling-place,
Spares but the cloudy border of his base
To the foiled searching of mortality;
And thou, who didst the stars and sunbeams know,
Self-schooled, self-scanned, self-honored, self-secure, 10
Didst tread on earth unguessed at.—Better so!
All pains the immortal spirit must endure,
All weakness which impairs, all griefs which bow,
Find their sole speech in that victorious brow. (1849)

*A deeply sensitive classical scholar, whose poetry always has clearness and balance. See headnote page 11-546. *Shakespeare.* Cf. "To the Memory of My Beloved, Master William Shakespeare" (page 374)

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

Come, dear children, let us away,
Down and away below.
Now my brothers call from the bay;
Now the great winds shoreward blow;
Now the salt tides seaward flow; 5
Now the wild white horses play,
Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.
Children dear, let us away,
This way, this way!

Call her once before you go, 10
Call once yet,
In a voice that she will know:
"Margaret! Margaret!"
Children's voices should be dear
(Call once more) to a mother's ear, 15
Children's voices, wild with pain.
Surely she will come again!
Call her once and come away;
This way, this way!
"Mother dear, we cannot stay." 20
The wild white horses foam and fret.
Margaret! Margaret!

Come, dear children, come away down;
Call no more.
One last look at the white-walled town, 25
And the little gray church on the windy shore;
Then come down.
She will not come though you call all day.
Come away, come away.

Children dear, was it yesterday 30
We heard the sweet bells over the bay?
In the caverns where we lay,
Through the surf and through the swell,
The far-off sound of a silver bell?
Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,
Where the winds are all asleep; 36
Where the spent lights quiver and gleam;
Where the salt weed sways in the stream;

The Forsaken Merman. There is an old folklore superstition that mermen or mermaids lure mortals to live with them in the sea. In this poem the mortal wife has forsaken her merman husband.

Where the sea-beasts, ranged all round,
Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground; 40
Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,
Dry their mail, and bask in the brine;
Where great whales come sailing by,
Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
Round the world forever and aye? 45
When did music come this way?
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, was it yesterday
(Call yet once) that she went away?
Once she sate with you and me, 50
On a red-gold throne in the heart of the sea,
And the youngest sate on her knee.
She combed its bright hair, and she tended it well,
When down swung the sound of a far-off bell.
She sighed, she looked up through the clear green sea, 55
She said, "I must go, for my kinsfolk pray
In the little gray church on the shore today.
'Twill be Easter-time in the world—ah, me!
And I lose my poor soul, Merman, here with thee."
I said, "Go up, dear heart, through the waves; 60
Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind sea-caves."
She smiled, she went up through the surf in the bay.
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, were we long alone?
"The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan. 65
Long prayers," I said, "in the world they say;
Come," I said, and we rose through the surf in the bay.
We went up the beach, by the sandy down
Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-walled town.
Through the narrow paved streets, where all was still, 70
To the little gray church on the windy hill.
From the church came a murmur of folk at their prayers,
But we stood without in the cold-blowing airs.
We climbed on the graves, on the stones worn with rains,
And we gazed up the aïsle through the small leaded panes. 75
She sate by the pillar; we saw her clear:
"Margaret, hist! come quick, we are here.
Dear heart," I said, "we are long alone.
The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan."
But, ah! she gave me never a look, 80
For her eyes were sealed to the holy book.
Loud prays the priest; shut stands the door.
Come away, children, call no more.
Come away, come down, call no more.

Down, down, down; 85
Down to the depths of the sea.
She sits at her wheel in the humming town,
Singing most joyfully.
Hark what she sings: "O joy, O joy,
For the humming street, and the child with its toy. 90
For the priest, and the bell, and the holy well.
For the wheel where I spun,
And the blessed light of the sun."
And so she sings her fill,
Singing most joyfully, 95
Till the spindle drops from her hand,
And the whizzing wheel stands still.
She steals to the window, and looks at the sand,
And over the sand at the sea;
And her eyes are set in a stare; 100
And anon there breaks a sigh,
And anon there drops a tear,
From a sorrow-clouded eye,
And a heart sorrow-laden,
A long, long sigh 105
For the cold strange eyes of a little mermaiden,
And the gleam of her golden hair.

Come away, away, children,
Come children, come down.
The hoarse wind blows colder; 110
Lights shine in the town.
She will start from her slumber
When gusts shake the door;
She will hear the winds howling,
Will hear the waves roar. 115
We shall see, while above us
The waves roar and whirl,
A ceiling of amber,
A pavement of pearl.
Singing, "Here came a mortal, 120
But faithless was she;
And alone dwell forever
The kings of the sea."

But, children, at midnight,
When soft the winds blow, 125
When clear falls the moonlight,
When spring-tides are low,
When sweet airs come seaward
From heaths starred with broom,
And high rocks throw mildly 130
On the blanched sands a gloom—
Up the still, glistening beaches,
Up the creeks we will hie,
Over banks of bright seaweed
The ebb-tide leaves dry. 135
We will gaze, from the sand-hills,
At the white, sleeping town;
At the church on the hillside—
And then come back down,
Singing, "There dwells a loved one, 140
But cruel is she.
She left lonely forever
The kings of the sea."

(1849)

SELF-DECEPTION

Say, what blinds us, that we claim the glory
Of possessing powers not our share?
—Since man woke on earth, he knows his story,
But, before we woke on earth, we were.

Long, long since, undowered yet, our spirit 5
Roamed, ere birth, the treasuries of God;
Saw the gifts, the powers it might inherit,
Asked an outfit for its earthly road.

Then, as now, this tremulous, eager being
Strained and longed and grasped each gift it saw; 10
Then, as now, a Power beyond our seeing,
Staved us back, and gave our choice the law.

Ah, whose hand that day through heaven guided
Man's new spirit, since it was not we?
Ah, who swayed our choice and who decided 15
What our gifts, and what our wants should be?

For, alas! he left us each retaining
Shreds of gifts which he refused in full.
Still these waste us with their hopeless straining,
Still the attempt to use them proves them null. 20

And on earth we wander, groping, reeling;
Powers stir in us, stir and disappear.
Ah! and he, who placed our master-feeling,
Failed to place that master-feeling clear.

We but dream we have our wished-for powers, 25
Ends we seek we never shall attain.
Ah! *some* power exists there, which is ours?
Some end is there, we indeed may gain?

(1852)

A SUMMER NIGHT

In the deserted, moon-blanched street,
How lonely rings the echo of my feet!
Those windows, which I gaze at, frown,
Silent and white, unopening down,
Repellant as the world—but see, 5

Self-Deception. Cf. "Intimations of Immortality" (page 465) and "Caliban upon Setebos" (page 561).

A Summer Night. Cf. "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" (page 633), the second of the three sonnets of Timrod (page 654), "Summer Night, Riverside" (page 694), and "The Harbor" (page 709).

A break between the housetops shows
The moon! and, lost behind her, fading dim
Into the dewy dark obscurity
Down at the far horizon's rim.
Doth a whole tract of heaven disclose! 10

And to my mind the thought
Is on a sudden brought
Of a past night, and a far different scene.
Headlands stood out into the moonlit deep
As clearly as at noon; 15
The spring-tide's brimming flow
Heaved dazzlingly between;

Houses, with long white sweep,
Girdled the glistening bay;
Behind, through the soft air, 20
The blue haze-cradled mountains spread away,
The night was far more fair—
But the same restless pacings to and fro,
And the same vainly throbbing heart was there,
And the same bright, calm moon. 25

And the calm moonlight seems to say:
Hast thou then still the old unquiet breast,
Which neither deadens into rest,
Nor ever feels the fiery glow
That whirls the spirit from itself away,
But fluctuates to and fro, 31
Never by passion quite possessed
And never quite benumbed by the world's sway?—
And I, I know not if to pray
Still to be what I am, or yield and be 35
Like all the other men I see.

For most men in a brazen prison live,
Where, in the sun's hot eye,
With heads bent o'er their toil, they languidly
Their lives to some unmeaning taskwork give, 40
Dreaming of nought beyond their prison wall.
And as, year after year,
Fresh products of their barren labor fall
From their tired hands, and rest
Never yet comes more near, 45
Gloom settles slowly down over their breast;
And while they try to stem
The waves of mournful thought by which they are pressed,
Death in their prison reaches them,
Unfreed, having seen nothing, still unblest. 50

And the rest, a few,
Escape their prison and depart
On the wide ocean of life anew.
There the freed prisoner, where'er his heart
Listeth, will sail; 55
Nor doth he know how there prevail,
Despotic on that sea,
Tradewinds which cross it from eternity.
A while he holds some false way, undebarred
By thwarting signs, and braves 60
The freshening wind and blackening waves
And then the tempest strikes him; and between
The lightning-bursts is seen
Only a driving wreck,
And the pale master on his spar-strewn deck 65
With anguished face and flying hair
Grasping the rudder hard,
Still bent to make some port he knows not where,
Still standing for some false, impossible shore.
And sterner comes the roar 70
Of sea and wind, and through the deepening gloom
Fainter and fainter wreck and helmsman loom,
And he, too, disappears, and comes no more.

Is there no life, but these alone?
Madman or slave, must man be one? 75

Plainness and clearness without shadow of stain!
Clearness divine!
Ye heavens, whose pure dark regions have no sign
Of languor, though so calm, and, though so great,
Are yet untroubled and unpassionate; 80
Who, though so noble, share in the world's toil,

And, though so tasked, keep free from dust and soil!
I will not say that your mild deeps retain
A tinge, it may be, of their silent pain
Who have longed deeply once, and longed in vain— 85
But I will rather say that you remain
A world above man's head, to let him see
How boundless might his soul's horizons be,
How vast, yet of what clear transparency!
How it were good to abide there, and breathe free; 90
How fair a lot to fill
Is left to each man still!

(1852)

THE BURIED LIFE

Light flows our war of mocking words, and yet,
Behold, with tears mine eyes are wet!
I feel a nameless sadness o'er me roll.
Yes, yes, we know that we can jest,
We know, we know that we can smile!
But there's a something in this breast, 6
To which thy light words bring no rest,
And thy gay smiles no anodyne.
Give me thy hand, and hush awhile,
And turn those limpid eyes on mine, 10
And let me read there, love! thy inmost soul.

Alas! is even love too weak
To unlock the heart, and let it speak?
Are even lovers powerless to reveal
To one another what indeed they feel? 15
I knew the mass of men concealed
Their thoughts, for fear that if revealed
They would by other men be met
With blank indifference, or with blame reproved;
I knew they lived and moved 20
Tricked in disguises, alien to the rest
Of men, and alien to themselves—and yet
The same heart beats in every human breast!

The Buried Life. Cf. "Let Me Not to the Marriage of True Minds" (page 367). "The Buried Life" is one of the poems which mirror the struggle of the soul; for an earlier example see "The Collar" (page 386).

But we, my love!—doth a like spell benumb
Our hearts, our voices?—must we, too, be dumb? 25

Ah! well for us, if even we,
Even for a moment, can get free
Our heart, and have our lips unchained;
For that which seals them hath been deep-ordained!

Fate, which foresaw 30
How frivolous a baby man would be—
By what distractions he would be possessed,
How he would pour himself in every strife,
And well nigh change his own identity—
That it might keep from his capricious play 35
His genuine self, and force him to obey
Even in his own despite his being's law,
Bade through the deep recesses of our breast
The unregarded river of our life
Pursue with indiscernible flow its way;
And that we should not see 41
The buried stream, and seem to be
Eddying at large in blind uncertainty,
Though driving on with it eternally.

But often, in the world's most crowded streets, 45
But often, in the din of strife,
There rises an unspeakable desire
After the knowledge of our buried life;
A thirst to spend our fire and restless force
In tracking out our true, original course;
A longing to inquire 51
Into the mystery of this heart which beats
So wild, so deep in us—to know
Whence our lives come and where they go.
And many a man in his own breast then delves, 55
But deep enough, alas! none ever mines.
And we have been on many thousand lines,
And we have shown, on each, spirit and power;
But hardly have we, for one little hour,

Been on our own line, have we been ourselves—
Hardly had skill to utter one of all
The nameless feelings that course through our breast,
But they course on forever unexpressed,
And long we try in vain to speak and act
Our hidden self, and what we say and do
Is eloquent, is well—but 'tis not true!
And then we will no more be racked
With inward striving, and demand
Of all the thousand nothings of the hour
Their stupefying power;
Ah, yes, and they benumb us at our call!
Yet still, from time to time, vague and forlorn,
From the soul's subterranean depth upborne
As from an infinitely distant land,
Come airs, and floating echoes, and convey
A melancholy into all our day.

Only—but this is rare—
When a beloved hand is laid in ours,
When, jaded with the rush and glare
Of the interminable hours,
Our eyes can in another's eyes read clear,
When our world-deafened ear
Is by the tones of a loved voice caressed—
A bolt is shot back somewhere in our breast,
And a lost pulse of feeling stirs again.
The eye sinks inward, and the heart lies plain,
And what we mean, we say, and what we would, we know.
A man becomes aware of his life's flow,
And hears its winding murmur; and he sees
The meadows where it glides, the sun, the breeze.

And there arrives a lull in the hot race
Wherein he doth forever chase
That flying and elusive shadow, rest.
An air of coolness plays upon his face,
And an unwonted calm pervades his breast.
And then he thinks he knows
The hills where his life rose,
And the sea where it goes. (1852)

PHILOMELA

Hark! ah, the Nightingale!
The tawny-throated!
Hark! from that moonlit cedar what a burst!
What triumph! hark!—what pain!

O wanderer from a Grecian shore,
Still, after many years, in distant lands,
Still nourishing in thy bewildered brain
That wild, unquenched, deep-sunken, old-world pain—
Say, will it never heal?
And can this fragrant lawn
With its cool trees, and night,
And the sweet, tranquil Thames,
And moonshine, and the dew,
To thy racked heart and brain
Afford no balm?

Dost thou tonight behold
Here, through the moonlight on this English grass,
The unfriendly palace in the Thracian wild?
Dost thou again peruse
With hot cheeks and seared eyes
The too clear web, and thy dumb sister's shame?
Dost thou once more assay
Thy flight, and feel come over thee,
Poor fugitive, the feathery change
Once more, and once more seem to make resound
With love and hate, triumph and agony,
Lone Daulis, and the high Cephissian vale?
Listen, Eugenia—
How thick the bursts come crowding through the leaves!
Again—thou hearest?
Eternal Passion?
Eternal Pain! (1853)

IMMORTALITY

Foiled by our fellow-men, depressed, outworn,
We leave the brutal world to take its way,
And, *Patience! in another life*, we say,

Philomela. See note on "The Swallow" (page 407).
27. **Daulis**, Thrace. **Cephissian vale**, in Attica.
Immortality. Cf. "Rabbi Ben Ezra" (page 558).

The world shall be thrust down, and we upborne.
And will not, then, the immortal armies scorn 5
The world's poor, routed leavings? or will they,
Who failed under the heat of this life's day,
Support the fervors of the heavenly morn?
No, no! the energy of life may be
Kept on after the grave, but not begun;
And he who flagged not in the earthly strife, 11
From strength to strength advancing—only he,
His soul well-knit, and all his battles won,
Mounts, and that hardly, to eternal life. (1867)

DOVER BEACH

The sea is calm tonight,
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the straits—on the French coast the light
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay. 5
Come to the window; sweet is the night-air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-blanched land,
Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling, 10
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago 15
Heard it on the Aegean, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery; we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea. 20

Dover Beach. Cf. "It Is a Beauteous Evening, Calm and Free" (page 468). 15. **Sophocles** (496-406 B.C.), a Greek dramatist.

The Sea of Faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled,
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath 26
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.
Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems 30
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain 35
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night. (1867)

GROWING OLD

What is it to grow old?
Is it to lose the glory of the form,
The luster of the eye?
Is it for beauty to forego her wreath?
—Yes, but not this alone. 5

Is it to feel our strength—
Not our bloom only, but our strength—decay?
Is it to feel each limb
Grow stiffer, every function less exact,
Each nerve more loosely strung? 10

Yes, this, and more; but not
Ah, 'tis not what in youth we dreamed 'twould be!
'Tis not to have our life
Mellowed and softened as with sunset-glow,
A golden day's decline. 15

'Tis not to see the world
As from a height, with rapt prophetic eyes,

Growing Old. Cf. "Rabbi Ben Ezra" (page 558).

And heart profoundly stirred;
And weep, and feel the fullness of the past,
The years that are no more. 20

It is to spend long days
And not once feel that we were ever young;
It is to add, immured
In the hot prison of the present, month
To month with weary pain. 25

It is to suffer this,
And feel but half, and feebly, what we feel.
Deep in our hidden heart
Festers the dull remembrance of a change,
But no emotion—none. 30

It is—last stage of all—
When we are frozen up within, and quite
The phantom of ourselves,
To hear the world applaud the hollow ghost
Which blamed the living man.

(1867)

RUGBY CHAPEL

NOVEMBER, 1857

Coldly, sadly descends
The autumn evening. The field,
Strewn with its dank yellow drifts
Of withered leaves, and the elms,
Fade into dimness apace, 5
Silent—hardly a shout
From a few boys late at their play!
The lights come out in the street,
In the school-room windows—but cold,
Solemn, unlighted, austere, 10
Through the gathering darkness, arise
The chapel-walls, in whose bound
Thou, my father! art laid.

There thou dost lie, in the gloom
Of the autumn evening. But ah, 15
That word, *gloom*, to my mind
Brings thee back, in the light
Of thy radiant vigor, again;
In the gloom of November we passed
Days not dark at thy side; 20
Seasons impaired not the ray
Of thy buoyant cheerfulness clear.
Such thou wast! and I stand
In the autumn evening, and think
Of bygone autumns with thee. 25

Fifteen years have gone round
Since thou arosest to tread,
In the summer-morning, the road
Of death, at a call unforeseen,
Sudden. For fifteen years, 30
We who till then in thy shade
Rested as under the boughs
Of a mighty oak have endured
Sunshine and rain as we might,
Bare, unshaded, alone, 35
Lacking the shelter of thee.

O strong soul, by what shore
Tarriest thou now? For that force,
Surely, has not been left vain!
Somewhere, surely, afar, 40
In the sounding labor-house vast
Of being, is practiced that strength,
Zealous, beneficent, firm!

Yes, in some far-shining sphere,
Conscious or not of the past, 45
Still thou performest the word
Of the Spirit in whom thou dost live—
Prompt, unwearied, as here!
Still thou upraisest with zeal
The humble good from the ground, 50
Sternly repressest the bad!
Still, like a trumpet, dost rouse
Those who with half-open eyes
Tread the border-land dim
'Twixt vice and virtue; reviv'st, 55
Succorest! This was thy work,
This was thy life upon earth.

What is the course of the life
Of mortal men on the earth?
Most men eddy about 60
Here and there—eat and drink,
Chatter and love and hate,
Gather and squander, are raised
Aloft, are hurled in the dust,
Striving blindly, achieving 65
Nothing; and then they die—
Perish—and no one asks

Rugby Chapel. Matthew Arnold was the son of the famous Thomas Arnold, headmaster of Rugby, who is described in Hughes's *Tom Brown's School-Days.* Cf. "Dominus Illuminatio Mea" (page 590).

Who or what they have been,
More than he asks what waves,
In the moonlit solitudes mild 70
Of the midmost ocean, have swelled,
Foamed for a moment, and gone.

And there are some, whom a thirst
Ardent, unquenchable, fires,
Not with the crowd to be spent, 75
Not without aim to go round
In an eddy of purposeless dust,
Effort unmeaning and vain.
Ah, yes! some of us strive
Not without action to die 80
Fruitless, but something to snatch
From dull oblivion, nor all
Glut the devouring grave!
We, we have chosen our path—
Path to a clear-purposed goal, 85
Path of advance!—but it leads
A long, steep journey, through sunk
Gorges, o'er mountains in snow.
Cheerful, with friends, we set forth—
Then, on the height, comes the storm. 90
Thunder crashes from rock
To rock, the cataracts reply,
Lightnings dazzle our eyes.
Roaring torrents have breached
The track, the stream-bed descends 95
In the place where the wayfarer once
Planted his footstep—the spray
Boils o'er its borders! aloft
The unseen snow-beds dislodge
Their hanging ruin! alas, 100
Havoc is made in our train!
Friends, who set forth at our side,
Falter, are lost in the storm.
We, we only are left!
With frowning foreheads, with lips 105
Sternly compressed, we strain on,
On—and at nightfall at last
Come to the end of our way,
To the lonely inn 'mid the rocks;
Where the gaunt and taciturn host 110
Stands on the threshold, the wind
Shaking his thin white hairs—
Holds his lantern to scan
Our storm-beat figures, and asks:
Whom in our party we bring, 115
Whom we have left in the snow?

Sadly we answer: We bring
Only ourselves! we lost
Sight of the rest in the storm;
Hardly ourselves we fought through, 120
Stripped, without friends, as we are.
Friends, companions, and train,
The avalanche swept from our side.

But thou would'st not *alone*
Be saved, my father! *alone* 125
Conquer and come to thy goal,
Leaving the rest in the wild.
We were weary, and we
Fearful, and we in our march
Fain to drop down and to die. 130
Still thou turnedst, and still
Beckonedst the trembler, and still
Gavest the weary thy hand.
If, in the paths of the world,
Stones might have wounded thy feet, 135
Toil or dejection have tried
Thy spirit, of that we saw
Nothing—to us thou wast still
Cheerful, and helpful, and firm!
Therefore to thee it was given 140
Many to save with thyself;
And, at the end of thy day,
Oh, faithful shepherd! to come,
Bringing thy sheep in thy hand.

And through thee I believe 145
In the noble and great who are gone;
Pure souls honored and blest
By former ages, who else—
Such, so soulless, so poor,
Is the race of men whom I see— 150
Seemed but a dream of the heart,
Seemed but a cry of desire.
Yes! I believe that there lived
Others like thee in the past,
Not like the men of the crowd 155
Who all round me today
Bluster or cringe, and make life
Hideous, and arid, and vile;
But souls tempered with fire,
Fervent, heroic, and good, 160
Helpers and friends of mankind.

Servants of God!—or sons
Shall I not call you? because
Not as servants ye knew
Your Father's innermost mind, 165
His, who unwillingly sees
One of his little ones lost—
Yours is the praise, if mankind
Hath not as yet in its march
Fainted, and fallen, and died! 170

See! In the rocks of the world
Marches the host of mankind,
A feeble, wavering line.
Where are they tending?—A God
Marshaled them, gave them their goal.
Ah, but the way is so long!
Years they have been in the wild!
Sore thirst plagues them, the rocks,
Rising all round, overawe;
Factions divide them, their host
Threatens to break, to dissolve.
—Ah, keep, keep them combined!
Else, of the myriads who fill
That army, not one shall arrive;
Sole they shall stray; on the rocks
Stagger forever in vain,
Die one by one in the waste.

Then, in such hour of need
Of your fainting, dispirited race,
Ye, like angels, appear,
Radiant with ardor divine!
Beacons of hope ye appear!
Languor is not in your heart,
Weakness is not in your word,
Weariness not on your brow.
Ye alight in our van! at your voice,
Panic, despair, flee away.
Ye move through the ranks, recall
The stragglers, refresh the outworn,
Praise, reinspire the brave!
Order, courage, return.
Eyes rekindling, and prayers,
Follow your steps as ye go.
Ye fill up the gaps in our files,
Strengthen the wavering line,
Stablish, continue our march,
On, to the bound of the waste,
On, to the City of God.

(1867)

THE LAST WORD

Creep into thy narrow bed,
Creep, and let no more be said!
Vain thy onset! all stands fast.
Thou thyself must break at last.

Let the long contention cease!
Geese are swans, and swans are geese.
Let them have it how they will!
Thou art tired; best be still.

They out-talked thee, hissed thee, tore thee!
Better men fared thus before thee;
Fired their ringing shot and passed,
Hotly charged—and sank at last.

Charge once more, then, and be dumb!
Let the victors, when they come,
When the forts of folly fall,
Find thy body by the wall.

(1867)

The Last Word. Cf. "Invictus" (page 600) and "Reveille" (page 703).

JOHN HENRY, CARDINAL NEWMAN (1801-1890)

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT

Lead, Kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead thou me on!
The night is dark, and I am far from home—
Lead thou me on!
Keep thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene—one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that Thou
Shouldst lead me on.
I loved to choose and see my path; but now
Lead thou me on!
I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will; remember not past years.

So long thy power hath blessed me, sure it still
Will lead me on,
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
The night is gone;
And with the morn those angel faces smile
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.

(1833)

*DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI
(1828-1882)

MY SISTER'S SLEEP

She fell asleep on Christmas Eve;
At length the long-ungranted shade
Of weary eyelids overweighed
The pain nought else might yet relieve.

Our mother, who had leaned all day 5
Over the bed from chime to chime,
Then raised herself for the first time,
And as she sat her down, did pray.

Her little work-table was spread
With work to finish. For the glare 10
Made by her candle, she had care
To work some distance from the bed.

Without, there was a cold moon up,
Of winter radiance sheer and thin;
The hollow halo it was in 15
Was like an icy crystal cup.

Through the small room, with subtle sound
Of flame, by vents the fire-shine drove
And reddened. In its dim alcove
The mirror shed a clearness round. 20

I had been sitting up some nights,
And my tired mind felt weak and blank;
Like a sharp strengthening wine it drank
The stillness and the broken lights.

Twelve struck. That sound, by dwindling years 25
Heard in each hour, crept off; and then
The ruffled silence spread again,
Like water that a pebble stirs.

Our mother rose from where she sat:
Her needles, as she laid them down,
Met lightly, and her silken gown 31
Settled; no other noise than that.

"Glory unto the newly born!"
So, as said angels, she did say;
Because we were in Christmas Day, 35
Though it would still be long till morn.

Just then in the room over us
There was pushing back of chairs,
As some who had sat unawares
So late, now heard the hour, and rose. 40

With anxious softly-stepping haste
Our mother went where Margaret lay,
Fearing the sounds o'erhead—should they
Have broken her long watched-for rest!

She stooped an instant, calm, and turned; 45
But suddenly turned back again;
And all her features seemed in pain
With woe, and her eyes gazed and yearned.

For my part, I but hid my face,
And held my breath, and spoke no word. 50
There was none spoken; but I heard
The silence for a little space.

Our mother bowed herself and wept;
And both my arms fell, and I said,
"God knows I knew that she was dead." 55
And there, all white, my sister slept.

Then kneeling, upon Christmas morn
A little after twelve o'clock
We said, ere the first quarter struck,
"Christ's blessing on the newly born!"

(1850)

*Rossetti was the leader of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, which attempted to recapture the intense sincerity, simplicity, and religious faith of Italian painting before Raphael. Rossetti's poetry shows the same characteristics as his paintings. When his poems were published in 1870 there was a fierce attack upon them as "The Fleshly School in Poetry." Rossetti was a precursor of Swinburne and such poets as Arthur Symons. In America such poetry was made more primitive and vigorous by Whitman. Rossetti was a brilliant man, but the last years of his life were marked by mental weakness.

My Sister's Sleep. Rossetti's meticulous attention to details produces profound emotional reactions by very simple statements. The details give a narrative effect, but they are introduced merely to recall a powerful subjective emotion. Compare his use of detail with that of Coleridge in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (page 261). See also "I Remember, I Remember" (page 476), "Ring Out, Wild Bells" (page 538), and "The Raven" (page 649).

THE BLESSED DAMOZEL

The blessed damozel leaned out
From the golden bar of heaven;
Her eyes were deeper than the depth
Of waters stilled at even;
She had three lilies in her hand, 5
And the stars in her hair were seven.

Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem,
No wrought flowers did adorn,
But a white rose of Mary's gift,
For service meetly worn; 10
Her hair that lay along her back
Was yellow like ripe corn.

Her seemed she scarce had been a day
One of God's choristers;
The wonder was not yet quite gone 15
From that still look of hers;
Albeit, to them she left, her day
Had counted as ten years.

(To one, it is ten years of years.
. . . Yet now, and in this place, 20
Surely she leaned o'er me—her hair
Fell all about my face. . .
Nothing; the autumn fall of leaves.
The whole year sets apace.)

It was the rampart of God's house 25
That she was standing on;
By God built over the sheer depth
The which is space begun;
So high, that looking downward thence
She scarce could see the sun. 30

It lies in heaven, across the flood
Of ether, as a bridge.
Beneath, the tides of day and night
With flame and darkness ridge
The void, as low as where this earth 35
Spins like a fretful midge.

Around her, lovers, newly met
'Mid deathless love's acclaims,
Spoke evermore among themselves
Their heart-remembered names; 40
And the souls mounting up to God
Went by her like thin flames.

And still she bowed herself and stooped
Out of the circling charm;
Until her bosom must have made 45
The bar she leaned on warm,
And the lilies lay as if asleep
Along her bended arm.

From the fixed place of heaven she saw
Time like a pulse shake fierce 50
Through all the worlds. Her gaze still strove
Within the gulf to pierce
Its path; and now she spoke as when
The stars sang in their spheres.

The sun was gone now; the curled moon 55
Was like a little feather
Fluttering far down the gulf; and now
She spoke through the still weather.
Her voice was like the voice the stars
Had when they sang together. 60

(Ah sweet! Even now, in that bird's song,
Strove not her accents there,
Fain to be harkened? When those bells
Possessed the mid-day air,
Strove not her steps to reach my side 65
Down all the echoing stair?)

"I wish that he were come to me,
For he will come," she said.
"Have I not prayed in heaven?—on earth,
Lord, Lord, has he not prayed? 70
Are not two prayers a perfect strength?
And shall I feel afraid?

"When round his head the aureole clings,
And he is clothed in white,
I'll take his hand and go with him 75
To the deep wells of light;
As unto a stream we will step down,
And bathe there in God's sight.

"We two will stand beside that shrine,
Occult, withheld, untrod, 80
Whose lamps are stirred continually
With prayers sent up to God;
And see our old prayers, granted, melt
Each like a little cloud.

The Blessed Damozel. The rapturous mysticism of this poem is paralleled but not equaled by such works of the metaphysical poets as "The Flaming Heart" (page 390) and "The Hound of Heaven" (page 591). The poem is a complement to Poe's "The Raven" (page 649).
12. **ripe corn**, yellow grain.

"We two will lie i' the shadow of 85
That living, mystic tree
Within whose secret growth the Dove
Is sometimes felt to be,
While every leaf that His plumes touch
Saith His Name audibly. 90

"And I myself will teach to him,
I myself, lying so,
The songs I sing here; which his voice
Shall pause in, hushed and slow,
And find some knowledge at each pause, 95
Or some new thing to know."

(Alas! We two, we two, thou say'st!
Yea, one wast thou with me
That once of old. But shall God lift
To endless unity 100
The soul whose likeness with thy soul
Was but its love for thee?)

"We two," she said, "will seek the groves
Where the lady Mary is,
With her five handmaidens, whose names 105
Are five sweet symphonies,
Cecily, Gertrude, Magdalen,
Margaret, and Rosalys.

"Circlewise sit they, with bound locks
And foreheads garlanded; 110
Into the fine cloth, white like flame,
Weaving the golden thread,
To fashion the birth-robes for them
Who are just born, being dead.

"He shall fear, haply, and be dumb; 115
Then will I lay my cheek
To his, and tell about our love,
Not once abashed or weak;
And the dear Mother will approve
My pride, and let me speak. 120

"Herself shall bring us, hand in hand,
To Him round whom all souls
Kneel, the clear-ranged unnumbered heads
Bowed with their aureoles;
And angels meeting us shall sing, 125
To their citherns and citoles.

126. **citoles**, dulcimers; like zithers, but played with two small hammers.

"There will I ask of Christ the Lord
Thus much for him and me—
Only to live as once on earth
With Love, only to be, 130
As then awhile, forever now
Together, I and he."

She gazed and listened and then said,
Less sad of speech than mild—
"All this is when he comes." She ceased. 135
The light thrilled toward her, filled
With angels in strong, level flight.
Her eyes prayed, and she smiled.

(I saw her smile.) But soon their path
Was vague in distant spheres; 140
And then she cast her arms along
The golden barriers,
And laid her face between her hands,
And wept. (I heard her tears.)
(1850)

A NEW YEAR'S BURDEN

Along the grass sweet airs are blown
Our way this day in spring.
Of all the songs that we have known
Now which one shall we sing?
Not that, my love, ah, no!— 5
Not this, my love? why so!—
Yet both were ours, but hours will come and go.

The grove is all a pale frail mist,
The new year sucks the sun.
Of all the kisses that we kissed 10
Now which shall be the one?
Not that, my love, ah, no!—
Not this, my love?—heigh-ho
For all the sweets that all the winds can blow!

The branches cross above our eyes, 15
The skies are in a net;
And what's the thing beneath the skies
We two would most forget?
Not birth, my love, no, no—
Not death, my love, no, no— 20
The love once ours, but ours long hours ago.
(1850)

A New Year's Burden. Cf. "We'll Go No More a-Roving" (page 482). Title. **burden**, refrain.

FOUR SONNETS

From THE HOUSE OF LIFE

LXXI. THE CHOICE—I

Eat thou and drink; tomorrow thou shalt die.
Surely the earth, that's wise, being very old,
Needs not our help. Then loose me, love, and hold
Thy sultry hair up from my face, that I
May pour for thee this golden wine, brim-high, 5
Till round the glass thy fingers glow like gold.
We'll drown all hours; thy song, while hours are tolled,
Shall leap, as fountains veil the changing sky.
Now kiss, and think that there are really those,
My own high-bosomed beauty, who increase 10
Vain gold, vain lore, and yet might choose our way!
Through many years they toil; then on a day
They die not—for their life was death, —but cease;
And round their narrow lips the mold falls close.

LXXII. THE CHOICE—II

Watch thou and fear; tomorrow thou shalt die.
Or art thou sure thou shalt have time for death?
Is not the day which God's word promiseth
To come man knows not when? In yonder sky,
Now while we speak, the sun speeds forth. Can I 5
Or thou assure him of his goal? God's breath
Even at this moment haply quickeneth
The air to a flame; till spirits, always nigh
Though screened and hid, shall walk the daylight here.
And dost thou prate of all that man shall do? 10
Canst thou, who hast but plagues presume to be
Glad in his gladness that comes after thee?
Will *his* strength slay *thy* worm in Hell? Go to;
Cover thy countenance, and watch, and fear.

LXXIII. THE CHOICE—III

Think thou and act; tomorrow thou shalt die.
Outstretched in the sun's warmth upon the shore,
Thou say'st: "Man's measured path is all gone o'er.
Up all his years, steeply, with strain and sigh,
Man clomb until he touched the truth; and I, 5
Even I, am he whom it was destined for."
How should this be? Art thou then so much more
Than they who sowed, that thou shouldst reap thereby?
Nay, come up hither. From this wave-washed mound
Unto the furthest flood-brim look with me; 10
Then reach on with thy thought till it be drowned.
Miles and miles distant though the last line be,
And though thy soul sail leagues and leagues beyond—
Still, leagues beyond those leagues, there is more sea.

LXXVII. SOUL'S BEAUTY

(*Sibylla Palmifera*)

Under the arch of Life, where love and death,
Terror and mystery, guard her shrine, I saw
Beauty enthroned; and though her gaze struck awe,
I drew it in as simply as my breath.

Sonnets from the House of Life. A sonnet sequence, which is regarded by many as Rossetti's greatest work. Modeling these poems upon the Italian sonnets of the Renaissance, he recorded his spiritual life from 1850 on. The loss of his wife in 1862 deepened the note of love, but the sonnets are predominantly mystic. Many of them refer to pictures, as does "Soul's Beauty."

Hers are the eyes which, over and beneath, 5
The sky and sea bend on thee—which can draw,
By sea or sky or woman, to one law,
The allotted bondman of her palm and wreath.
This is that Lady Beauty, in whose praise
Thy voice and hand shake still—long known to thee 10
By flying hair and fluttering hem—the beat
Following her daily of thy heart and feet,
How passionately and irretrievably,
In what fond flight, how many ways and days! (1869, 1870, 1881)

*CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI (1830-1894)

UPHILL

Does the road wind uphill all the way?
Yes, to the very end.
Will the day's journey take the whole long day?
From morn to night, my friend.

But is there for the night a resting-place? 5
A roof for when the slow, dark hours begin.
May not the darkness hide it from my face?
You cannot miss that inn.

Shall I meet other wayfarers at night?
Those who have gone before. 10
Then must I knock, or call when just in sight?
They will not keep you waiting at that door.

Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak?
Of labor you shall find the sum.
Will there be beds for me and all who seek?
Yea, beds for all who come. (1862)

*The sister of Dante Gabriel Rossetti always lived a secluded and intensely religious life. Her poetry is that of a mystic.
Uphill. Cf. "The Wanderers" (page 626).

*RICHARD DODDRIDGE BLACKMORE (1825-1900)

DOMINUS ILLUMINATIO MEA

In the hour of death, after this life's whim,
When the heart beats low, and the eyes grow dim,
And pain has exhausted every limb—
The lover of the Lord shall trust in him.

When the will has forgotten the lifelong aim, 5
And the mind can only disgrace its fame,
And a man is uncertain of his own name—
The power of the Lord shall fill this frame.

When the last sigh is heaved, and the last tear shed,
And the coffin is waiting beside the bed,
And the widow and child forsake the dead— 11
The angel of the Lord shall lift this head.

For even the purest delight may pall,
And power must fail, and the pride must fall,
And the love of the dearest friends grow small— 15
But the glory of the Lord is all in all.

†AUSTIN DOBSON (1840-1921)

IN AFTER DAYS

RONDEAU

In after days when grasses high
O'er-top the stone where I shall lie,
Though ill or well the world adjust
My slender claim to honored dust,
I shall not question nor reply. 5

*Author of *Lorna Doone.* The title of the poem is the motto of Oxford University, "God is my light."
†A charming poet who belonged to the eighteenth century in spirit, but who lived in the nineteenth century. He used complicated French lyric meters with great success.
In After Days. Cf. "Requiem" (page 599).

I shall not see the morning sky;
I shall not hear the night-wind sigh;
I shall be mute, as all men must
In after days!

But yet, now living, fain would I 10
That someone then should testify,
Saying: "He held his pen in trust
To Art, not serving shame or lust."
Will none?—Then let my memory die
In after days!

(1920)

*FRANCIS THOMPSON (1859-1907)

THE HOUND OF HEAVEN

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter. 5
Up vistaed hopes I sped;
And shot, precipitated,
Adown titanic glooms of chasméd fears,
From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.

But with unhurrying chase, 10
And unperturbéd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
They beat—and a Voice beat
More instant than the Feet—
"All things betray thee, who betrayest Me." 15

I pleaded, outlaw-wise,
By many a hearted casement, curtained red,
Trellised with intertwining charities;
(For, though I knew His love who followéd,
Yet was I sore adread 20
Lest, having Him, I must have naught beside.)
But, if one little casement parted wide,
The gust of His approach would clash it to.
Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue.
Across the margent of the world I fled,
And troubled the gold gateways of the stars, 26
Smiting for shelter on their clangéd bars;
Fretted to dulcet jars
And silvern chatter the pale ports o' the moon.
I said to dawn: Be sudden; to eve: Be soon— 30
With thy young skyey blossoms heap me over
From this tremendous Lover!
Float thy vague veil about me, lest He see!
I tempted all His servitors, but to find
My own betrayal in their constancy, 35
In faith to Him their fickleness to me,
Their traitorous trueness, and their loyal deceit.
To all swift things for swiftness did I sue;
Clung to the whistling mane of every wind.
But whether they swept, smoothly fleet, 40
The long savannahs of the blue;
Or whether, thunder-driven,
They clanged His chariot 'thwart a heaven,
Plashy with flying lightnings round the spurn o' their feet—
Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue. 45

Still with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbéd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
Came on the following Feet,
And a Voice above their beat— 50
"Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter Me."

I sought no more that after which I strayed
In face of man or maid;
But still within the little children's eyes

*A destitute poet, who battled with tuberculosis all his life and finally succumbed to it. His mysticism is magnificent in the power of its utterance, and stands beside that of Crashaw and Rossetti. "The Hound of Heaven" is the last of the great series which we have noted in this book, wherein the soul struggles for freedom against the power of Eternal Love. See "The Collar" (page 386). The dreamlike atmosphere is remarkable and should be compared with that of "The Raven" (page 649).

Seems something, something that replies, 55
They at least are for me, surely for me!
I turned me to them very wistfully;
But just as their young eyes grew sudden fair
With dawning answers there,
Their angel plucked them from me by the hair. 60
"Come then, ye other children, Nature's —share
With me" (said I) "your delicate fellowship;
Let me greet you lip to lip,
Let me twine with you caresses,
Wantoning 65
With our Lady-Mother's vagrant tresses,
Banqueting
With her in her wind-walled palace,
Underneath her azured dais,
Quaffing, as your taintless way is, 70
From a chalice
Lucent-weeping out of the day-spring."
So it was done:
I in their delicate fellowship was one—
Drew the bolt of Nature's secrecies. 75
I knew all the swift importings
On the willful face of skies;
I knew how the clouds arise,
Spuméd of the wild sea-snortings;
All that's born or dies 80
Rose and drooped with; made them shapers
Of mine own moods, or wailful or divine—
With them joyed and was bereaven.
I was heavy with the even,
When she lit her glimmering tapers 85
Round the day's dead sanctities.
I laughed in the morning's eyes.
I triumphed and I saddened with all weather,
Heaven and I wept together,
And its sweet tears were salt with mortal mine; 90
Against the red throb of its sunset-heart
I laid my own to beat,
And share commingling heat;
But not by that, by that, was eased my human smart.
In vain my tears were wet on heaven's gray cheek. 95
For ah! we know not what each other says,
These things and I; in sound *I* speak—
Their sound is but their stir, they speak by silences.
Nature, poor stepdame, cannot slake my drought;
Let her, if she would owe me, 100
Drop yon blue bosom-veil of sky, and show me
The breasts o' her tenderness;
Never did any milk of hers once bless
My thirsting mouth.

Nigh and nigh draws the chase, 105
With unperturbéd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
And past those noiséd Feet
A Voice comes yet more fleet—
"Lo! naught contents thee, who content'st not Me." 110

Naked I wait Thy love's uplifted stroke!
My harness piece by piece Thou hast hewn from me,
And smitten me to my knee;
I am defenseless utterly;
I slept, methinks, and woke, 115
And, slowly gazing, find me stripped in sleep.
In the rash lustihead of my young powers,
I shook the pillaring hours
And pulled my life upon me; grimed with smears,
I stand amid the dust o' the mounded years— 120
My mangled youth lies dead beneath the heap.
My days have crackled and gone up in smoke,
Have puffed and burst as sun-starts on a stream.
Yea, faileth now even dream
The dreamer, and the lute the lutanist;
Even the linked fantasies, in whose blossomy twist 126
I swung the earth a trinket at my wrist,
Are yielding; cords of all too weak account
For earth, with heavy griefs so overplussed.
Ah! is Thy love indeed 130
A weed, albeit an amaranthine weed,

Suffering no flowers except its own to mount?
Ah! must—
Designer infinite!—
Ah! must Thou char the wood ere Thou canst limn with it? 135
My freshness spent its wavering shower i' the dust;
And now my heart is as a broken fount,
Wherein tear-drippings stagnate, spilt down ever
From the dank thoughts that shiver
Upon the sighful branches of my mind.
Such is; what is to be? 141
The pulp so bitter, how shall taste the rind?
I dimly guess what Time in mists confounds;
Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds
From the hid battlements of Eternity:
Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then 146
Round the half-glimpséd turrets slowly wash again;
But not ere him who summoneth
I first have seen, enwound
With glooming robes purpureal, cypress-crowned; 150
His name I know, and what his trumpet saith.
Whether man's heart or life it be which yields
Thee harvest, must Thy harvest fields
Be dunged with rotten death?

Now of that long pursuit 155
Comes on at hand the bruit;
That Voice is round me like a bursting sea:
"And is thy earth so marred,
Shattered in shard on shard?
Lo, all things fly thee, for thou fliest Me! 160
Strange, piteous, futile thing!
Wherefore should any set thee love apart?
Seeing none but I makes much of naught"
(He said),
"And human love needs human meriting:
How hast thou merited— 165
Of all man's clotted clay the dingiest clot?
Alack, thou knowest not
How little worthy of any love thou art!
Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,
Save Me, save only Me? 170
All which I took from thee I did but take,
Not for thy harms,
"But just that thou might'st seek it in my arms.
All which thy child's mistake
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home— 175
Rise, clasp My hand and come!"

Halts by me that footfall;
Is my gloom, after all,
Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?
"Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest, 180
I am He whom thou seekest!
Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me." (1890, 1893)

*ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE (1837-1909)

CHORUSES FROM ATALANTA IN CALYDON

THE YOUTH OF THE YEAR

When the hounds of spring are on winter's traces,
The mother of months in meadow or plain
Fills the shadows and windy places
With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain;
And the brown bright nightingale amorous 5
Is half assuaged for Itylus,
For the Thracian ships and the foreign faces,
The tongueless vigil, and all the pain—

*A brilliant romanticist, whose brain worked at such fever heat that at times he had nervous breakdowns. His health was never robust, and he lived in seclusion during the last years of his life. Swinburne was an ardent admirer of the Greeks, and prided himself upon his ability to write poetry in Greek. He was equally proficient in French. His poetry is a voluptuous and torrential outpouring of beautiful images, so rich as often to cloy the reader or to obscure the central idea of the poem. Swinburne is generally hedonistic. To him nothing compensates for the loss of youth with its powers of emotional enjoyment, and as one grows older, the world becomes more perplexing, more horrible.

Atalanta in Calydon. A tragedy written in the Euripidean manner. 6. **Itylus . . . Thracian ships.** See note on "The Swallow" (page 407).

Come with bows bent and with emptying of quivers,
  Maiden most perfect, lady of light, 10
With a noise of winds and many rivers,
  With a clamor of waters, and with might;
Bind on thy sandals, O thou most fleet,
Over the splendor and speed of thy feet;
For the faint east quickens, the wan west shivers, 15
  Round the feet of the day and the feet of the night.

Where shall we find her, how shall we sing to her,
  Fold our hands round her knees, and cling?
O that man's heart were as fire and could spring to her,
  Fire, or the strength of the streams that spring! 20
For the stars and the winds are unto her
As raiment, as songs of the harp-player;
For the risen stars and the fallen cling to her,
  And the southwest wind and the west wind sing.

For winter's rains and ruins are over, 25
  And all the season of snows and sins;
The days dividing lover and lover,
  The light that loses, the night that wins;
And time remembered is grief forgotten,
And frosts are slain and flowers begotten, 30
And in green underwood and cover
  Blossom by blossom the spring begins.

The full streams feed on flower of rushes,
  Ripe grasses trammel a traveling foot,
The faint fresh flame of the young year flushes 35
  From leaf to flower and flower to fruit;
And fruit and leaf are as gold and fire,
And the oat is heard above the lyre,
And the hoofed heel of a satyr crushes
  The chestnut-husk at the chestnut root. 40

10. **Maiden most perfect**, Diana. 38. **oat**, pipe.

And Pan by noon and Bacchus by night,
  Fleeter of foot than the fleet-foot kid,
Follows with dancing and fills with delight
  The Maenad and the Bassarid;
And soft as lips that laugh and hide 45
The laughing leaves of the trees divide,
And screen from seeing and leave in sight
  The god pursuing, the maiden hid.

The ivy falls with the Bacchanal's hair,
  Over her eyebrows hiding her eyes; 50
The wild vine slipping down leaves bare
  Her bright breast shortening into sighs;
The wild vine slips with the weight of its leaves,
But the berried ivy catches and cleaves
To the limbs that glitter, the feet that scare 55
  The wolf that follows, the fawn that flies.

THE LIFE OF MAN

Before the beginning of years
  There came to the making of man
Time, with a gift of tears;
  Grief, with a glass that ran;
Pleasure, with pain for leaven; 5
  Summer, with flowers that fell;
Remembrance fallen from heaven,
  And madness risen from hell;
Strength without hands to smite;
  Love that endures for a breath; 10
Night, the shadow of light,
  And life, the shadow of death.

And the high gods took in hand
  Fire, and the falling of tears,
And a measure of sliding sand 15
  From under the feet of the years;
And froth and drift of the sea;
  And dust of the laboring earth;
And bodies of things to be
  In the houses of death and of birth; 20
And wrought with weeping and laughter
  And fashioned with loathing and love,
With life before and after
  And death beneath and above,
For a day and a night and a morrow, 25

44. **Maenad**, a female attendant on Bacchus. **Bassarid**, a Thracian Bacchanal, or reveler of Bacchus.

That his strength might endure for a span
With travail and heavy sorrow,
The holy spirit of man.

From the winds of the north and the south
They gathered as unto strife; 30
They breathed upon his mouth,
They filled his body with life;
Eyesight and speech they wrought
For the veils of the soul therein,
A time for labor and thought, 35
A time to serve and to sin;
They gave him light in his ways,
And love, and a space for delight,
And beauty and length of days,
And night, and sleep in the night. 40
His speech is a burning fire;
With his lips he travaileth;
In his heart is a blind desire,
In his eyes foreknowledge of death;
He weaves, and is clothed with derision;
Sows, and he shall not reap; 46
His life is a watch or a vision
Between a sleep and a sleep.

(1865)

THE GARDEN OF PROSERPINE

Here, where the world is quiet,
Here, where all trouble seems
Dead winds' and spent waves' riot
In doubtful dreams of dreams,
I watch the green field growing 5
For reaping folk and sowing,
For harvest-time and mowing,
A sleepy world of streams.

I am tired of tears and laughter,
And men that laugh and weep; 10
Of what may come hereafter
For men that sow to reap.
I am weary of days and hours,
Blown buds of barren flowers,
Desires and dreams and powers 15
And everything but sleep.

Here life has death for neighbor,
And far from eye or ear
Wan waves and wet winds labor,
Weak ships and spirits steer; 20
They drive adrift, and whither
They wot not who make thither;
But no such winds blow hither,
And no such things grow here.

No growth of moor or coppice, 25
No heather-flower or vine,
But bloomless buds of poppies,
Green grapes of Proserpine,
Pale beds of blowing rushes,
Where no leaf blooms or blushes 30
Save this whereout she crushes
For dead men deadly wine.

Pale, without name or number,
In fruitless fields of corn,
They bow themselves and slumber 35
All night till light is born;
And like a soul belated,
In hell and heaven unmated,
By cloud and mist abated
Comes out of darkness morn. 40

Though one were strong as seven,
He too with death shall dwell,
Nor wake with wings in heaven,
Nor weep for pains in hell;
Though one were fair as roses, 45
His beauty clouds and closes;
And well though love reposes,
In the end it is not well.

Pale, beyond porch and portal,
Crowned with calm leaves, she stands
Who gathers all things mortal 51
With cold, immortal hands;
Her languid lips are sweeter
Than love's who fears to greet her,
To men that mix and meet her 55
From many times and lands.

She waits for each and other,
She waits for all men born;
Forgets the earth her mother,
The life of fruits and corn; 60
And spring and seed and swallow
Take wing for her and follow
Where summer song rings hollow
And flowers are put to scorn.

There go the loves that wither, 65
The old loves with wearier wings;

The Garden of Proserpine. Proserpine was the young queen of the dead. The poem reflects later Greek disillusionment with life. Cf. the Choric Song in "The Lotos-Eaters" (page 527), and "An Echo from Horace" (page 626).

And all dead years draw thither,
  And all disastrous things;
Dead dreams of days forsaken,
Blind buds that snows have shaken, 70
Wild leaves that winds have taken,
  Red strays of ruined springs.

We are not sure of sorrow;
  And joy was never sure;
Today will die tomorrow; 75
  Time stoops to no man's lure;
And love, grown faint and fretful,
With lips but half regretful
Sighs, and with eyes forgetful
  Weeps that no loves endure. 80

From too much love of living,
  From hope and fear set free,
We thank with brief thanksgiving
  Whatever gods may be
That no life lives forever; 85
That dead men rise up never;
That even the weariest river
  Winds somewhere safe to sea.

Then star nor sun shall waken,
  Nor any change of light; 90
Nor sound of waters shaken,
  Nor any sound or sight;
Nor wintry leaves nor vernal,
Nor days nor things diurnal—
Only the sleep eternal 95
  In an eternal night. (1866)

COR CORDIUM

(SHELLEY)

O Heart of hearts, the chalice of love's fire,
Hid round with flowers and all the bounty of bloom;
O wonderful and perfect heart, for whom
The lyrist liberty made life a lyre;
O heavenly heart, at whose most dear desire 5
Dead love, living and singing, cleft his tomb,
And with him risen and regent in death's room
All day thy choral pulses rang full choir;
O heart whose beating blood was running song,
O sole thing sweeter than thine own songs were, 10
Help us for thy free love's sake to be free,
True for thy truth's sake, for thy strength's sake strong,
Till very liberty make clean and fair
The nursing earth as the sepulchral sea. (1871)

Cor Cordium. "Heart of Hearts". Cf. "Memorabilia" (page 552).

A FORSAKEN GARDEN

In a coign of the cliff between lowland and highland,
  At the sea-down's edge between windward and lee,
Walled round with rocks as an inland island,
  The ghost of a garden fronts the sea.
A girdle of brushwood and thorn inclosES 5
  The steep square slope of the blossomless bed
Where the weeds that grew green from the graves of its roses
  Now lie dead.

The fields fall southward, abrupt and broken,
  To the low last edge of the long lone land. 10
If a step should sound or a word be spoken,
  Would a ghost not rise at the strange guest's hand?
So long have the gray bare walks lain guestless,
  Through branches and briers if a man make way,
He shall find no life but the sea-wind's restless 15
  Night and day.

The dense hard passage is blind and stifled
  That crawls by a track none turn to climb
To the strait waste place that the years have rifled
  Of all but the thorns that are touched not of time. 20
The thorns he spares when the rose is taken;
  The rocks are left when he wastes the plain;

The wind that wanders, the weeds wind-shaken,
These remain.

Not a flower to be pressed of the foot that falls not; 25
As the heart of a dead man the seed-plots are dry;
From the thicket of thorns whence the nightingale calls not
Could she call, there were never a rose to reply.
Over the meadows that blossom and wither, 29
Rings but the note of a sea-bird's song.
Only the sun and the rain come hither
All year long.

The sun burns sear, and the rain dishevels
One gaunt bleak blossom of scentless breath.
Only the wind here hovers and revels
In a round where life seems barren as death. 36
Here there was laughing of old, there was weeping,
Haply, of lovers none ever will know,
Whose eyes went seaward a hundred sleeping
Years ago. 40

Heart handfast in heart as they stood, "Look thither,"
Did he whisper? "Look forth from the flowers to the sea;
For the foam-flowers endure when the rose-blossoms wither,
And men that love lightly may die—but we?"
And the same wind sang, and the same waves whitened, 45
And or ever the garden's last petals were shed,
In the lips that had whispered, the eyes that had lightened,
Love was dead.

Or they loved their life through, and then went whither?
And were one to the end—but what end who knows? 50
Love deep as the sea as a rose must wither,
As the rose-red seaweed that mocks the rose.
Shall the dead take thought for the dead to love them?
What love was ever as deep as a grave?
They are loveless now as the grass above them 55
Or the wave.

All are at one now, roses and lovers,
Not known of the cliffs and the fields and the sea.
Not a breath of the time that has been hovers 59
In the air now soft with a summer to be.
Not a breath shall there sweeten the seasons hereafter
Of the flowers or the lovers that laugh now or weep,
When as they that are free now of weeping and laughter
We shall sleep.

Here death may deal not again forever;
Here change may come not till all change end. 66
From the graves they have made they shall rise up never,
Who have left naught living to ravage and rend.
Earth, stones, and thorns of the wild ground growing,
While the sun and the rain live, these shall be; 70
Till a last wind's breath, upon all these blowing,
Roll the sea.

Till the slow sea rise, and the sheer cliff crumble,
Till terrace and meadow the deep gulfs drink,
Till the strength of the waves of the high tides humble 75
The fields that lessen, the rocks that shrink,
Here now in his triumph where all things falter,
Stretched out on the spoils that his own hand spread,
As a god self-slain on his own strange altar,
Death lies dead. (1878)

*ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON (1850-1894)

ROMANCE

I will make you brooches and toys for your delight
Of bird-song at morning and star-shine at night.
I will make a palace fit for you and me,
Of green days in forests and blue days at sea.

I will make my kitchen, and you shall keep your room, 5
Where white flows the river and bright blows the broom,
And you shall wash your linen and keep your body white
In rainfall at morning and dewfall at night.

And this shall be for music when no one else is near,
The fine song for singing, the rare song to hear! 10
That only I remember, that only you admire,
Of the broad road that stretches and the roadside fire. (1895)

IN THE HIGHLANDS

In the highlands, in the country places,
Where the old plain men have rosy faces,
And the young fair maidens
Quiet eyes;
Where essential silence chills and blesses, 5
And forever in the hill-recesses
Her more lovely music
Broods and dies—

O to mount again where erst I haunted;
Where the old red hills are bird-enchanted, 10
And the low green meadows
Bright with sward;
And when even dies, the million-tinted,
And the night has come, and planets glinted,
Lo, the valley hollow 15
Lamp-bestarred!

O to dream, O to awake and wander
There, and with delight to take and render,
Through the trance of silence,
Quiet breath! 20
Lo! for there, among the flowers and grasses,
Only the mightier movement sounds and passes;
Only winds and rivers,
Life and death.

(1895)

SING ME A SONG

Sing me a song of a lad that is gone,
Say, could that lad be I?
Merry of soul he sailed on a day
Over the sea to Skye.

Mull was astern, Rum on the port, 5
Egg on the starboard bow;
Glory of youth glowed in his soul:
Where is that glory now?

Sing me a song of a lad that is gone,
Say, could that lad be I? 10
Merry of soul he sailed on a day
Over the sea to Skye.

Give me again all that was there,
Give me the sun that shone!
Give me the eyes, give me the soul, 15
Give me the lad that's gone!

Sing me a song of a lad that is gone,
Say, could that lad be I?
Merry of soul he sailed on a day
Over the sea to Skye. 20

Billow and breeze, islands and seas,
Mountains of rain and sun,
All that was good, all that was fair,
All that was me is gone.

(1895)

*See headnote on Stevenson (page II-570). His poems were written as a pastime between 1888-1894, and they are chiefly reminiscent of his childhood.

Sing Me a Song. 4-6. **Skye, Mull, Rum, Egg,** islands off the west coast of Scotland.

REQUIEM

Under the wide and starry sky
  Dig the grave and let me lie;
Glad did I live and gladly die,
  And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me: 5
Here he lies where he longed to be;
Home is the sailor, home from sea,
  And the hunter home from the hill.
(1895)

*WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY (1849-1903)

BALLADE OF A TOYOKUNI COLOR-PRINT

Was I a Samurai renowned,
Two-sworded, fierce, immense of bow?
A histrion angular and profound?
A priest? a porter?—Child, although
I have forgotten clean, I know 5
That in the shade of Fujisan,
What time the cherry-orchards blow,
I loved you once in old Japan.

As here you loiter, flowing-gowned
And hugely sashed, with pins a-row 10
Your quaint head as with flamelets crowned,
Demure, inviting—even so,
When merry maids in Miyako
To feel the sweet o' the year began,
And green gardens to overflow, 15
I loved you once in old Japan.

Clear shine the hills; the rice-fields round
Two cranes are circling; sleepy and slow,
A blue canal the lake's blue bound
Breaks at the bamboo bridge; and lo! 20
Touched with the sundown's spirit and glow,
I see you turn, with flirted fan,
Against the plum-tree's bloomy snow. . .
I loved you once in old Japan!

Envoy

Dear, 'twas a dozen lives ago; 25
But that I was a lucky man
The Toyokuni here will show:
I loved you—once—in old Japan. (1888)

*A tubercular foot, which was cut off when he was a youth, scarred Henley's life with pain. He was a fighter, and yet a tender appreciator of beauty. "Invictus" is not the dominant note in his poems, as will be made clear by the following selections. Henley wrote much occasional verse, perhaps as an avocation in an intense editorial life.

Ballade of a Toyokuni Color-Print. Toyokuni was a Japanese artist (1768-1825) who has left us many paintings of actors and swordsmen. 3. **histrion**, actor. 6. **Fujisan**, Mt. Fujiyama, in Japan. 13. **Miyako**, a harbor town in northeastern Japan.

THE WAYS OF DEATH

The ways of Death are soothing and serene,
And all the words of Death are grave and sweet.
From camp and church, the fireside and the street,
She beckons forth—and strife and song have been.

A summer night descending cool and green 5
And dark on daytime's dust and stress and heat,
The ways of Death are soothing and serene,
And all the words of Death are grave and sweet.

O glad and sorrowful, with triumphant mien 9
And radiant faces look upon, and greet
This last of all your lovers, and to meet
Her kiss, the Comforter's, your spirit lean. . . .
The ways of Death are soothing and serene. 1878 (1888)

WHAT IS TO COME WE KNOW NOT

What is to come we know not. But we know
That what has been was good—was good to show,
Better to hide, and best of all to bear.
We are the masters of the days that were—
We have lived, we have loved, we have suffered . . . even so. 5

Shall we not take the ebb who had the flow?

The Ways of Death. Cf. "In the Highlands" (page 598).

Life was our friend. Now, if it be our foe—
Dear, though it spoil and break us!—need we care
What is to come?

Let the great winds their worst and wildest blow, 10
Or the gold weather round us mellow slow;
We have fulfilled ourselves, and we can dare
And we can conquer, though we may not share
In the rich quiet of the afterglow
What is to come. (1888)

INVICTUS

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance 5
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the horror of the shade, 10
And yet the menace of the years
Finds and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate: 15
I am the captain of my soul.
1875 (1888)

WE'LL GO NO MORE A-ROVING

We'll go no more a-roving by the light of the moon.
November glooms are barren beside the dusk of June.
The summer flowers are faded, the summer thoughts are sear.
We'll go no more a-roving, lest worse befall, my dear.

Invictus. Cf. "Reveille" (page 703).
We'll Go No More a-Roving. Cf. Byron's poem of the same title (page 482) and "An Echo from Horace" (page 626).

We'll go no more a-roving by the light of the moon. 5
The song we sang rings hollow, and heavy runs the tune.
Glad ways and words remembered would shame the wretched year.
We'll go no more a-roving, nor dream we did, my dear.

We'll go no more a-roving by the light of the moon.
If yet we walk together, we need not shun the noon. 10
No sweet thing left to savor, no sad thing left to fear,
We'll go no more a-roving, but weep at home, my dear. 1875 (1888)

MARGARITAE SORORI

A late lark twitters from the quiet skies;
And from the west,
Where the sun, his day's work ended,
Lingers as in content,
There falls on the old, gray city 5
An influence luminous and serene,
A shining peace.

The smoke ascends
In a rosy-and-golden haze. The spires
Shine and are changed. In the valley 10
Shadows rise. The lark sings on. The sun,
Closing his benediction,
Sinks, and the darkening air
Thrills with a sense of the triumphing night—
Night with her train of stars 15
And her great gift of sleep.

So be my passing!
My task accomplished and the long day done,
My wages taken, and in my heart
Some late lark singing, 20
Let me be gathered to the quiet west,
The sundown splendid and serene,
Death. (1888)

Margaritae Sorori. "To Sister Margaret." Contrast this mood with that of "Invictus" and "Requiem" (page 599).

ON THE WAY TO KEW

On the way to Kew,
By the river old and gray,
Where in the Long Ago
We laughed and loitered so,
I met a ghost today, 5
A ghost that told of you—
A ghost of low replies
And sweet inscrutable eyes,
Coming up from Richmond
As you used to do. 10

By the river old and gray,
The enchanted Long Ago
Murmured and smiled anew.
On the way to Kew,
March had the laugh of May, 15
The bare boughs looked aglow,
And old immortal words
Sang in my breast like birds,
Coming up from Richmond
As I used with you. 20

With the life of Long Ago
Lived my thought of you.
By the river old and gray,
Flowing his appointed way,
As I watched I knew 25
What is so good to know—
Not in vain, not in vain,
Shall I look for you again,
Coming up from Richmond
On the way to Kew.

(1888)

FROM THE BRAKE THE NIGHTINGALE

From the brake the Nightingale
Sings exulting to the Rose;
Though he sees her waxing pale
In her passionate repose,
While she triumphs waxing frail 5
Fading even while she glows;
Though he knows
How it goes—
Knows of last year's Nightingale
Dead with last year's Rose. 10

Wise the enamored Nightingale,
Wise the well-beloved Rose!
Love and life shall still prevail,
Nor the silence at the close
Break the magic of the tale 15
In the telling, though it shows—
Who but knows
How it goes!—
Life a last year's Nightingale,
Love a last year's Rose. (1888)

MATRI DILECTISSIMAE

In the waste hour
Between today and yesterday
We watched, while on my arm—
Living flesh of her flesh, bone of her bone—
Dabbled in sweat the sacred head 5
Lay uncomplaining, still, contemptuous, strange;
Till the dear face turned dead,
And to a sound of lamentation
The good, heroic soul with all its wealth—
Its sixty years of love and sacrifice, 10
Suffering and passionate faith—was reabsorbed
In the inexorable Peace,
And life was changed to us for evermore.

Was nothing left of her but tears
Like blood-drops from the heart? 15
Nought save remorse
For duty unfulfilled, justice undone,
And charity ignored? Nothing but love,
Forgiveness, reconcilement, where in truth,
But for this passing 20
Into the unimaginable abyss
These things had never been?

Nay, there were we,
Her five strong sons!
To her Death came—the great Deliverer came!— 25
As equal comes to equal, throne to throne.
She was a mother of men.

On The Way to Kew. Contrast this mood with "When the Year Grows Old" (page 695). Title, 9. Kew and Richmond are suburbs of London up the River Thames.

From the Brake the Nightingale. Cf. "Tears, Idle Tears" (page 532) and "Ask Me No More" (page 532).

Matri Dilectissimae. "To My Dearest Mother." Compare the noble simplicity of this poem with that of "On the Receipt of My Mother's Picture" (page 427), "Rugby Chapel" (page 583), "My Sister's Sleep" (page 586), and "Pater Filio" (page 605).

The stars shine as of old. The unchanging river,
Bent on his errand of immortal law,
Works his appointed way 30
To the immemorial sea.
And the brave truth comes overwhelmingly home:
That she in us yet works and shines,
Lives and fulfills herself,
Unending as the river and the stars. 35

Dearest, live on
In such an immortality
As we thy sons,
Born of thy body and nursed
At those wild, faithful breasts, 40
Can give—of generous thoughts,
And honorable words, and deeds
That make men half in love with fate!
Live on, O brave and true,
In us thy children, in ours whose life is thine— 45
Our best and theirs! What is that best but thee—
Thee, and thy gift to us, to pass
Like light along the infinite of space
To the immitigable end?

Between the river and the stars, 50
O royal and radiant soul,
Thou dost return, thine influences return
Upon thy children as in life and death
Turns stingless! What is Death
But Life in act? How should the Unteeming Gray 55
Be victor over thee,
Mother, a mother of men?

(1888)

ENGLAND, MY ENGLAND

What have I done for you,
England, my England?
What is there I would not do,
England, my own?
With your glorious eyes austere, 5
As the Lord were walking near,
Whispering terrible things and dear
As the song on your bugles blown,
England—
Round the world on your bugles blown!

Where shall the watchful sun, 10
England, my England,
Match the master-work you've done,
England, my own?
When shall he rejoice again
Such a breed of mighty men 15
As come forward, one to ten,
To the song on your bugles blown,
England—
Down the years on your bugles blown?

Ever the faith endures, 20
England, my England—
"Take and break us; we are yours,
England, my own!
Life is good, and joy runs high
Between English earth and sky.
Death is death; but we shall die 25
To the song on your bugles blown,
England—
To the stars on your bugles blown!"

They call you proud and hard,
England, my England;
You with worlds to watch and ward, 30
England, my own!
You whose mailed hand keeps the keys
Of such teeming destinies,
You could know nor dread nor ease
Were the song on your bugles blown,
England, 35
Round the Pit on your bugles blown!

Mother of ships whose might,
England, my England,
Is the fierce old sea's delight,
England, my own, 40
Chosen daughter of the Lord,
Spouse-in-chief of the ancient sword,
There's the menace of the word
In the song on your bugles blown,
England—
Out of heaven on your bugles blown!

(1892)

England, My England. Notice the freer and less formal emotional cry of patriotism here than in "Rule Britannia" (page 415), or "Ye Mariners of England" (page 475). The poem is a forerunner of the spirit of "Recessional" (page 609) and the English twentieth-century war poems.

36. **Pit,** hell.

*WILLIAM MORRIS (1834-1896)

SUMMER DAWN

Pray but one prayer for me 'twixt thy closed lips,
  Think but one thought of me up in the stars.
The summer night waneth, the morning light slips
  Faint and gray 'twixt the leaves of the aspen, betwixt the cloud-bars,
That are patiently waiting there for the dawn; 5
  Patient and colorless, though heaven's gold
Waits to float through them along with the sun.
Far out in the meadows, above the young corn,
  The heavy elms wait, and restless and cold
The uneasy wind rises; the roses are dun; 10
Through the long twilight they pray for the dawn
Round the lone house in the midst of the corn.
  Speak but one word to me over the corn,
  Over the tender, bowed locks of the corn.

(1856)

THE NYMPH'S SONG TO HYLAS

From THE LIFE AND DEATH OF JASON

I know a little garden-close
Set thick with lily and red rose,
Where I would wander if I might
From dewy dawn to dewy night,
And have one with me wandering. 5

And though within it no birds sing,
And though no pillared house is there,
And though the apple boughs are bare
Of fruit and blossom, would to God,
Her feet upon the green grass trod, 10
And I beheld them as before!

There comes a murmur from the shore,
And in the place two fair streams are,
Drawn from the purple hills afar,
Drawn down unto the restless sea; 15
The hills whose flowers ne'er fed the bee,
The shore no ship has ever seen,
Still beaten by the billows green,
Whose murmur comes unceasingly
Unto the place for which I cry; 20

For which I cry both day and night,
For which I let slip all delight,
That maketh me both deaf and blind,
Careless to win, unskilled to find,
And quick to lose what all men seek. 25

Yet tottering as I am, and weak,
Still have I left a little breath
To seek within the jaws of death
An entrance to that happy place;
To seek the unforgotten face 30
Once seen, once kissed, once reft from me
Anigh the murmuring of the sea.

(1867)

JUNE

From THE EARTHLY PARADISE

O June, O June, that we desired so,
Wilt thou not make us happy on this day?
Across the river thy soft breezes blow
Sweet with the scent of beanfields far away;
Above our heads rustle the aspens gray;
Calm is the sky with harmless clouds beset; 6
No thought of storm the morning vexes yet.

See, we have left our hopes and fears behind
To give our very hearts up unto thee;
What better place than this then could we find 10
By this sweet stream that knows not of the sea,
That guesses not the city's misery,
This little stream whose hamlets scarce have names,
This far-off, lonely mother of the Thames?

*See headnote to Morris on page 274.
The Nymph's Song to Hylas. Hylas, a boy companion of Hercules, was lured away by the nymphs.

Here then, O June, thy kindness will
we take; 15
And if indeed but pensive men we
seem,
What should we do? thou wouldst not
have us wake
From out the arms of this rare happy
dream
And wish to leave the murmur of the
stream,
The rustling boughs, the twitter of the
birds, 20
And all thy thousand peaceful happy
words. (1868)

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM (1824-1889)

THE FAIRIES

Up the airy mountain,
Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a-hunting
For fear of little men;
Wee folk, good folk, 5
Trooping all together;
Green jacket, red cap,
And white owl's feather!

Down along the rocky shore
Some make their home, 10
They live on crispy pancakes
Of yellow tide-foam;
Some in the reeds
Of the black mountain lake,
With frogs for their watch-dogs, 15
All night awake.

High on the hill-top
The old King sits;
He is now so old and gray
He's nigh lost his wits. 20
With a bridge of white mist
Columbkill he crosses,
On his stately journeys
From Slieveleague to Rosses;
Or going up with music 25
On cold starry nights
To sup with the Queen
Of the gay Northern Lights.

The Fairies. 22. **Columbkill**, Iona, a sacred island off the west coast of Scotland where the ancient Scotch kings were buried. 24. **Slieveleague**, a mountain on the coast of Donegal, Ireland. **Rosses**, a promontory on the Isle of Mull off the west coast of Scotland, near Iona.

They stole little Bridget
For seven years long; 30
When she came down again
Her friends were all gone.
They took her lightly back,
Between the night and morrow,
They thought that she was fast asleep,
But she was dead with sorrow. 36
They have kept her ever since
Deep within the lake,
On a bed of flag-leaves,
Watching till she wake. 40

By the craggy hill-side,
Through the mosses bare,
They have planted thorn-trees
For pleasure here and there.
If any man so daring 45
As dig them up in spite,
He shall find their sharpest thorns
In his bed at night.

Up the airy mountain,
Down the rushy glen, 50
We daren't go a-hunting
For fear of little men;
Wee folk, good folk,
Trooping all together;
Green jacket, red cap,
And white owl's feather! (1850)

*ROBERT BRIDGES (1844-1930)

MY DELIGHT AND THY DELIGHT

My delight and thy delight
Walking, like two angels white,
In the gardens of the night.

My desire and thy desire
Twining to a tongue of fire, 5
Leaping live, and laughing higher;

Through the everlasting strife
In the mystery of life.

Love, from whom the world begun,
Hath the secret of the sun. 10

Love can tell, and love alone,
Whence the million stars were strewn,

*Preceded Masefield as poet laureate of England. His tastes were classical.

Why each atom knows its own,
How, in spite of woe and death,
Gay is life, and sweet is breath. 15

This he taught us, this we knew,
Happy in his science true,
Hand in hand as we stood
'Neath the shadows of the wood,
Heart to heart as we lay 20
In the dawning of the day.

(1899)

NIGHTINGALES

Beautiful must be the mountains whence ye come,
And bright in the fruitful valleys the streams, wherefrom
Ye learn your song.
Where are those starry woods? O might I wander there
Among the flowers, which in that heavenly air 5
Bloom the year long!

Nay, barren are those mountains and spent the streams;
Our song is the voice of desire, that haunts our dreams,
A throe of the heart,
Whose pining visions dim, forbidden hopes profound, 10
No dying cadence nor long sigh can sound,
For all our art.

Alone, aloud in the raptured ear of men
We pour our dark nocturnal secret; and then,
As night is withdrawn 15
From these sweet-springing meads and bursting boughs of May,
Dream, while the innumerable choir of day
Welcome the dawn. (1894)

A PASSER-BY

Whither, O splendid ship, thy white sails crowding,
Leaning across the bosom of the urgent west,
That fearest nor sea rising, nor sky clouding,
Whither away, fair rover, and what thy quest?
Ah! soon, when Winter has all our vales opprest, 5
When skies are cold and misty, and hail is hurling,
Wilt thou glide on the blue Pacific, or rest
In a summer haven asleep, thy white sails furling.

I there before thee, in the country that well thou knowest,
Already arrived am inhaling the odorous air. 10
I watch thee enter unerringly where thou goest,
And anchor queen of the strange shipping there,
Thy sails for awnings spread, thy masts bare.
Nor is aught from the foaming reef to the snow-capped grandest
Peak, that is over the feathery palms, more fair 15
Than thou, so upright, so stately and still thou standest.

And yet, O splendid ship, unhailed and nameless,
I know not if, aiming a fancy, I rightly divine
That thou hast a purpose joyful, a courage blameless,
Thy port assured in a happier land than mine. 20
But for all I have given thee, beauty enough is thine,
As thou, aslant with trim tackle and shrouding,
From the proud nostril curve of a prow's line
In the offing scatterest foam, thy white sails crowding. (1890)

PATER FILIO

Sense with keenest edge unuséd,
Yet unsteeled by scathing fire;
Lovely feet as yet unbruiséd
On the ways of dark desire;

Pater Filio. Cf. "Of His Dear Son, Gervase" (page 375) and "The Breaking" (page 705).

Sweetest hope that lookest smiling 5
O'er the wilderness defiling!

Why such beauty, to be blighted
By the swarm of foul destruction?
Why such innocence delighted,
When sin stalks to thy seduction? 10
All the litanies e'er chaunted
Shall not keep thy faith undaunted.

I have prayed the sainted Morning
To unclasp her hands to hold thee;
From resignful Eve's adorning 15
Stol'n a robe of peace to enfold thee;
With all charms of man's contriving
Armed thee for thy lonely striving.

Me, too, once unthinking Nature
—Whence Love's timeless mockery took me— 20
Fashioned so divine a creature,
Yea, and like a beast, forsook me.
I forgave, but tell the measure
Of her crime in thee, my treasure.

(1899)

*RUDYARD KIPLING (1865-)

THE LAST CHANTEY
1892

"And there was no more sea"

Thus said the Lord in the Vault above the Cherubim,
Calling to the Angels and the Souls in their degree:
"Lo! Earth has passed away
On the smoke of Judgment Day.
That Our word may be established shall We gather up the sea?" 5

Loud sang the souls of the jolly, jolly mariners:
"Plague upon the hurricane that made us furl and flee!
But the war is done between us,
In the deep the Lord hath seen us—
Our bones we'll leave the barracout', and God may sink the sea!" 10

Then said the soul of Judas that betrayed Him:
"Lord, hast Thou forgotten Thy covenant with me?
How once a year I go
To cool me on the floe?
And Ye take my day of mercy if Ye take away the sea." 15

Then said the soul of the Angel of the Off-shore Wind:
(He that bits the thunder when the bull-mouthed breakers flee):
"I have watch and ward to keep
O'er Thy wonders on the deep,
And Ye take mine honour from me if Ye take away the sea!" 20

Loud sang the souls of the jolly, jolly mariners:
"Nay, but we were angry, and a hasty folk are we.
If we worked the ship together
Till she foundered in foul weather,
Are we babes that we should clamour for a vengeance on the sea?" 25

Then said the souls of the slaves that men threw overboard:
"Kennelled in the picaroon a weary band were we;
But Thy arm was strong to save,
And it touched us on the wave,
And we drowsed the long tides idle till Thy Trumpets tore the sea."

Then cried the soul of the stout Apostle Paul to God: 31
"Once we frapped a ship, and she laboured woundily.
There were fourteen score of these,
And they blessed Thee on their knees,
When they learned Thy Grace and Glory under Malta by the sea!"

Loud sang the souls of the jolly, jolly mariners, 36
Plucking at their harps, and they plucked unhandily:

*The poetry of Kipling is occasional in its nature, and often accompanies his prose. Both make an excellent vehicle for understanding the spirit of the British Empire at the end of the nineteenth century.

The Last Chantey. Title. A *chantey* is a sailor's song chanted in rhythm by the men while they work. Motto. This is from Revelation xxi, 1. Cf. this poem with "The Roll-Call of the Reef" (page II-662). 10. **barracout'**, the barracuda, a tropical fish which is as dangerous as a shark.

14. **To cool me on the floe**, a reference to the belief that one day of every year our Lord permits Judas to cool himself in the Arctic regions from the pains of hell. 27. **picaroon**, a pirate ship. 32. **frapped**, passed cables around the hull to keep the timbers from springing. **laboured woundily**, rolled heavily. 32-35. See Acts xxvii.

"Our thumbs are rough and tarred,
And the tune is something hard—
May we lift a Deepsea Chantey such
as seamen use at sea?" 40

Then said the souls of the gentlemen-adventurers—
Fettered wrist to bar all for red iniquity:
"Ho, we revel in our chains
O'er the sorrow that was Spain's;
Heave or sink it, leave or drink it, we
were masters of the sea!" 45

Up spake the soul of a grey Gothavn 'speckshioner—
(He that led the flenching in the fleets of fair Dundee);
"Oh, the ice-blink white and near,
And the bowhead breaching clear!
Will Ye whelm them all for wantonness that wallow in the sea?" 50

Loud sang the souls of the jolly, jolly mariners,
Crying: "Under Heaven, here is neither lead nor lee!
Must we sing for evermore
On the windless, glassy floor?
Take back your golden fiddles and
we'll beat to open sea!" 55

Then stooped the Lord, and He called the good sea up to Him,
And 'stablished its borders unto all eternity,
That such as have no pleasure
For to praise the Lord by measure,
They may enter into galleons and
serve Him on the sea. 60

Sun, Wind, and Cloud shall fail not
from the face of it,
Stinging, ringing spindrift, nor the
fulmar flying free;
And the ships shall go abroad
To the Glory of the Lord
Who heard the silly sailor-folk and
gave them back their sea! (1892)

41. **gentlemen-adventurers**, Elizabethan explorers and privateers against Spain. When captured, they were usually put in the galleys as rowers. 46. **'speckshioner**, chief harpooner, who directs cutting the blubber from the whale. 47. **flenching**, stripping the blubber from a whale. **Dundee**, a Scotch fishing port. 49. **bowhead breaching**, whale breaking out of water. 62. **spindrift**, windblown sea-spray. **fulmar**, a petrel. 63. **ships shall go abroad**, etc. Cf. Hakluyt's *Epistle Dedicatorie* (lines 20 ff., page II-285).

THE FEET OF THE YOUNG MEN

1897

Now the Four-way Lodge is opened, now the Hunting Winds are loose—
Now the Smokes of Spring go up to clear the brain;
Now the Young Men's hearts are troubled for the whisper of the Trues,
Now the Red Gods make their medicine again!
Who hath seen the beaver busied? Who hath watched the black-tail mating? 5
Who hath lain alone to hear the wild-goose cry?
Who hath worked the chosen water where the ouananiche is waiting,
Or the sea-trout's jumping-crazy for the fly?

He must go—go—go away from here!
On the other side the world he's overdue. 10
'Send your road is clear before you
when the old Spring-fret comes o'er you,
And the Red Gods call for you!

So for one the wet sail arching through the rainbow round the bow,
And for one the creak of snow-shoes on the crust;
And for one the lakeside lilies where the bull-moose waits the cow, 15
And for one the mule-train coughing in the dust.
Who hath smelt wood-smoke at twilight? Who hath heard the birch-log burning?
Who is quick to read the noises of the night?
Let him follow with the others, for the Young Men's feet are turning
To the camps of proved desire and known delight! 20

Let him go—go, etc.

The Feet of the Young Men. Cf. "Drake's Voyage" (page II-292). 7. **ouananiche**, land-locked salmon.

I

Do you know the blackened timber—
do you know that racing stream
With the raw, right-angled log-jam at the end;
And the bar of sun-warmed shingle where a man may bask and dream
To the click of shod canoe-poles round the bend? 25
It is there that we are going with our rods and reels and traces,
To a silent, smoky Indian that we know—
To a couch of new-pulled hemlock, with the starlight on our faces,
For the Red Gods call us out and we must go!

They must go—go, etc. 30

II

Do you know the shallow Baltic where the seas are steep and short,
Where the bluff, lee-boarded fishing-luggers ride?
Do you know the joy of threshing leagues to leeward of your port
On a coast you've lost the chart of overside?
It is there that I am going, with an extra hand to bale her— 35
Just one able 'long-shore loafer that I know.
He can take his chance of drowning, while I sail and sail and sail her,
For the Red Gods call me out and I must go!

He must go—go, etc.

III

Do you know the pile-built village where the sago-dealers trade— 40
Do you know the reek of fish and wet bamboo?
Do you know the steaming stillness of the orchid-scented glade
When the blazoned, bird-winged butterflies flap through?
It is there that I am going with my camphor, net, and boxes,
To a gentle, yellow pirate that I know— 45
To my little wailing lemurs, to my palms and flying-foxes,
For the Red Gods call me out and I must go!

He must go—go, etc.

IV

Do you know the world's white roof-tree
—do you know that windy rift
Where the baffling mountain-eddies chop and change? 50
Do you know the long day's patience, belly-down on frozen drift,
While the head of heads is feeding out of range?
It is there that I am going, where the boulders and the snow lie,
With a trusty, nimble tracker that I know.
I have sworn an oath, to keep it on the Horns of Ovis Poli, 55
And the Red Gods call me out and I must go!

He must go—go, etc.

Now the Four-way Lodge is opened—now the Smokes of Council rise—
Pleasant smokes, ere yet 'twixt trail and trail they choose—
Now the girths and ropes are tested: now they pack their last supplies: 60
Now our Young Men go to dance before the Trues!
Who shall meet them at those altars—who shall light them to that shrine?
Velvet-footed, who shall guide them to their goal?
Unto each the voice and vision: unto each his spoor and sign—
Lonely mountain in the Northland, misty sweat-bath 'neath the Line— 65

40. **sago**, an edible starch made from palms.

46. **lemurs**, mammals, chiefly nocturnal, related to monkeys. 55. **Ovis Poli**, a variety of bighorn sheep found on the mountains of Turkestan. 64. **spoor**, track, trace.

And to each a man that knows his naked soul!
White or yellow, black or copper, he is waiting, as a lover,
Smoke of funnel, dust of hooves, or beat of train—
Where the high grass hides the horseman or the glaring flats discover—
Where the steamer hails the landing, or the surf-boat brings the rover—
Where the rails run out in sand-drift . . . Quick! ah, heave the camp-kit over,
For the Red Gods make their medicine again!

And we go—go—go away from here!
On the other side the world we're overdue!
'Send the road is clear before you when the old Spring-fret comes o'er you,
And the Red Gods call for you!

(1897)

RECESSIONAL

1897

God of our fathers, known of old,
Lord of our far-flung battle-line,
Beneath whose awful Hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine—
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

The tumult and the shouting dies;
The Captains and the Kings depart:
Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

Far-called, our navies melt away;
On dune and headland sinks the fire:
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

If, drunk with sight of power, we loose
Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe,
Such boasting as the Gentiles use
Or lesser breeds without the Law—
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

For heathen heart that puts her trust
In reeking tube and iron shard,
All valiant dust that builds on dust,
And guarding calls not Thee to guard,
For frantic boast and foolish word—
Thy Mercy on Thy People, Lord!

(1897

Recessional. Written for the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria.

THE EXPLORER

1898

"There's no sense in going further—it's the edge of cultivation,"
So they said, and I believed it—broke my land and sowed my crop—
Built my barns and strung my fences in the little border station
Tucked away below the foothills where the trails run out and stop.

Till a voice, as bad as Conscience, rang interminable changes
On one everlasting Whisper day and night repeated—so:
"Something hidden. Go and find it. Go and look behind the Ranges—
"Something lost behind the Ranges. Lost and waiting for you. Go!"

So I went, worn out of patience; never told my nearest neighbours—
Stole away with pack and ponies—left 'em drinking in the town;
And the faith that moveth mountains didn't seem to help my labours
As I faced the sheer main-ranges, whipping up and leading down.

March by march I puzzled through 'em, turning flanks and dodging shoulders,
Hurried on in hope of water, headed back for lack of grass;
Till I camped above the tree-line—drifted snow and naked boulders—
Felt free air astir to windward—knew I'd stumbled on the Pass.

'Thought to name it for the finder: but that night the Norther found me—
Froze and killed the plains-bred ponies; so I called the camp Despair
(It's the Railway Gap to-day, though). Then my Whisper waked to hound me:—
"Something lost behind the Ranges. Over yonder! Go you there!" 20

Then I knew, the while I doubted—knew His Hand was certain o'er me.
Still—it might be self-delusion—scores of better men had died—
I could reach the township living, but . . . He knows what terror tore me...
But I didn't . . . but I didn't. I went down the other side,

Till the snow ran out in flowers, and the flowers turned to aloes, 25
And the aloes sprung to thickets and a brimming stream ran by;
But the thickets dwined to thorn-scrub, and the water drained to shallows,
And I dropped again on desert—blasted earth, and blasting sky. . . .

I remember lighting fires; I remember sitting by 'em;
I remember seeing faces, hearing voices, through the smoke; 30
I remember they were fancy—for I threw a stone to try 'em.
"Something lost behind the Ranges" was the only word they spoke.

I remember going crazy. I remember that I knew it
When I heard myself hallooing to the funny folk I saw.
'Very full of dreams that desert, but my two legs took me through it. . .
And I used to watch 'em moving with the toes all black and raw. 36

But at last the country altered—White Man's country past disputing—
Rolling grass and open timber, with a hint of hills behind—
There I found me food and water, and I lay a week recruiting.
Got my strength and lost my nightmares. Then I entered on my find.

Thence I ran my first rough survey—chose my trees and blazed and ringed 'em— 41
Week by week I pried and sampled—week by week my findings grew.
Saul he went to look for donkeys, and by God he found a kingdom!
But by God, who sent His Whisper, I had struck the worth of two!

Up along the hostile mountains, where the hair-poised snowslide shivers—45
Down and through the big fat marshes that the virgin ore-bed stains,
Till I heard the mile-wide mutterings of unimagined rivers,
And beyond the nameless timber saw illimitable plains!

'Plotted sites of future cities, traced the easy grades between 'em;
Watched unharnessed rapids wasting fifty thousand head an hour; 50
Counted leagues of water-frontage through the axe-ripe woods that screen 'em—
Saw the plant to feed a people—up and waiting for the power!

Well I know who'll take the credit—all the clever chaps that followed—
Came, a dozen men together—never knew my desert-fears;
Tracked me by the camps I'd quitted, used the water-holes I'd hollowed.
They'll go back and do the talking. *They'll* be called the Pioneers! 56

They will find my sites of townships—not the cities that I set there.
They will rediscover rivers—not my rivers heard at night.
By my own old marks and bearings they will show me how to get there,
By the lonely cairns I builded they will guide my feet aright. 60

Have I named one single river? Have I claimed one single acre?
Have I kept one single nugget—(barring samples)? No, not I!

27. **dwined**, dwindled.

43. **Saul**, etc. See I Samuel, ix.

Because my price was paid me ten times
over by my Maker.
But you wouldn't understand it. You
go up and occupy.

Ores you'll find there; wood and cattle;
water-transit sure and steady 65
(That should keep the railway rates
down), coal and iron at your doors.
God took care to hide that country till
He judged His people ready,
Then He chose me for His Whisper,
and I've found it, and it's yours!

Yes, your "Never-never country"—yes,
your "edge of cultivation"
And "no sense in going further"—
till I crossed the range to see. 70
God forgive me! No, *I* didn't. It's
God's present to our nation.
Anybody might have found it but—
His Whisper came to Me!

(1898)

THE WHITE MAN'S BURDEN

1899

Take up the White Man's burden—
Send forth the best ye breed—
Go bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives' need;
To wait in heavy harness, 5
On fluttered folk and wild—
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
Half-devil and half-child.

Take up the White Man's burden—
In patience to abide, 10
To veil the threat of terror
And check the show of pride;
By open speech and simple,
An hundred times made plain,
To seek another's profit, 15
And work another's gain.

Take up the White Man's burden—
The savage wars of peace—
Fill full the mouth of Famine
And bid the sickness cease; 20
And when your goal is nearest
The end for others sought,
Watch Sloth and heathen Folly
Bring all your hope to nought.

Take up the White Man's burden— 25
No tawdry rule of kings,
But toil of serf and sweeper—
The tale of common things.
The ports ye shall not enter,
The roads ye shall not tread, 30
Go make them with your living,
And mark them with your dead.

Take up the White Man's burden—
And reap his old reward:
The blame of those ye better, 35
The hate of those ye guard—
The cry of hosts ye humour
(Ah, slowly!) toward the light:—
"Why brought ye us from bondage,
"Our loved Egyptian night?" 40

Take up the White Man's burden—
Ye dare not stoop to less—
Nor call too loud on Freedom
To cloak your weariness;
By all ye cry or whisper, 45
By all ye leave or do,
The silent, sullen peoples
Shall weigh your Gods and you.

Take up the White Man's burden—
Have done with childish days— 50
The lightly proffered laurel,
The easy, ungrudged praise.
Comes now, to search your manhood
Through all the thankless years, 54
Cold, edged with dear-bought wisdom,
The judgment of your peers!

(1899)

RIMMON

1903

Duly with knees that feign to quake—
Bent head and shaded brow,—
Yet once again, for my father's sake,
In Rimmon's House I bow.

The curtains part, the trumpet blares, 5
And the eunuchs howl aloud;
And the gilt, swag-bellied idol glares
Insolent over the crowd.

"*This is Rimmon, Lord of the Earth*—
"*Fear Him and bow the knee!*" 10

Rimmon. See II Kings, v, 18.

And I watch my comrades hide their mirth
That rode to the wars with me.

For we remember the sun and the sand
And the rocks whereon we trod,
Ere we came to a scorched and a scornful land 15
That did not know our God;

As we remember the sacrifice
Dead men an hundred laid—
Slain while they served His mysteries,
And that He would not aid. 20

Not though we gashed ourselves and wept,
For the high-priest bade us wait;
Saying He went on a journey or slept,
Or was drunk or had taken a mate.

(*Praise ye Rimmon, King of Kings,* 25
Who ruleth Earth and Sky!
And again I bow as the censer swings
And the God Enthroned goes by.)

Ay, we remember His sacred ark
And the virtuous men that knelt 30
To the dark and the hush behind the dark
Wherein we dreamed He dwelt;

Until we entered to hale Him out,
And found no more than an old
Uncleanly image girded about 35
The loins with scarlet and gold.

Him we o'erset with the butts of our spears—
Him and his vast designs—
To be the scorn of our muleteers
And the jest of our halted lines. 40

By the picket-pins that the dogs defile
In the dung and the dust He lay,
Till the priests ran and chattered awhile
And wiped Him and took Him away.

Hushing the matter before it was known,
They returned to our fathers afar, 46
And hastily set Him afresh on His throne
Because he had won us the war.

27. **censer**, etc., the elevation of the Host in the Mass.

Wherefore with knees that feign to quake—
Bent head and shaded brow— 50
To this dead dog, for my father's sake,
In Rimmon's House I bow!

(1903)

"FOR ALL WE HAVE AND ARE"

1914

For all we have and are,
For all our children's fate,
Stand up and take the war.
The Hun is at the gate!
Our world has passed away 5
In wantonness o'erthrown.
There is nothing left to-day
But steel and fire and stone!
Though all we knew depart,
The old Commandments stand:—
"In courage keep your heart, 11
In strength lift up your hand."

Once more we hear the word
That sickened earth of old:—
"No law except the Sword 15
Unsheathed and uncontrolled."
Once more it knits mankind,
Once more the nations go
To meet and break and bind
A crazed and driven foe. 20

Comfort, content, delight,
The ages' slow-bought gain,
They shriveled in a night.
Only ourselves remain
To face the naked days 25
In silent fortitude,
Through perils and dismays
Renewed and re-renewed.
Though all we made depart,
The old Commandments stand:—
"In patience keep your heart, 31
In strength lift up your hand."

No easy hope or lies
Shall bring us to our goal,
But iron sacrifice 35
Of body, will, and soul.
There is but one task for all—
One life for each to give.
What stands if Freedom fall?
Who dies if England live? (1914)

*THOMAS HARDY (1840-)

SHE HEARS THE STORM

There was a time in former years—
While my roof-tree was his—
When I should have been distressed by fears
At such a night as this.

I should have murmured anxiously, 5
"The pricking rain strikes cold;
His road is bare of hedge or tree,
And he is getting old."

But now the fitful chimney-roar,
The drone of Thorncombe trees, 10
The Froom in flood upon the moor,
The mud of Mellstock Leaze,

The candle slanting sooty-wicked,
The thuds upon the thatch,
The eaves-drops on the window flicked,
The clacking garden-hatch, 16

And what they mean to wayfarers,
I scarcely heed or mind;
He has won that storm-tight roof of hers
Which Earth grants all her kind.
(1909)

IN THE MOONLIGHT

"O lonely workman, standing there
In a dream, why do you stare and stare
At her grave, as no other grave there were?

"If your great gaunt eyes so importune
Her soul by the shine of this corpse-cold moon, 5
Maybe you'll raise her phantom soon!"

"Why, fool, it is what I would rather see
Than all the living folk there be;
But alas, there is no such joy for me!"

"Ah—she was one you loved, no doubt,
Through good and evil, through rain and drought, 11
And when she passed, all your sun went out?"

"Nay; she was the woman I did not love,
Whom all the others were ranked above,
Whom during her life I thought nothing of." (1911)

THE MAN HE KILLED

"Had he and I but met
By some old ancient inn,
We should have sat us down to wet
Right many a nipperkin!

"But ranged as infantry, 5
And staring face to face,
I shot at him as he at me,
And killed him in his place.

"I shot him dead because—
Because he was my foe, 10
Just so—my foe of course he was;
That's clear enough; although

"He thought he'd 'list, perhaps,
Off-hand like—just as I— 14
Was out of work—had sold his traps—
No other reason why.

"Yes; quaint and curious war is!
You shoot a fellow down
You'd treat if met where any bar is,
Or help to half-a-crown." (1909)

*See headnote for Hardy on page 326.

The Man He Killed. 4. **nipperkin**, about a half pint of liquor.

TWENTIETH CENTURY

NOTE

It is an arbitrary division to start the twentieth century of English lyric poetry at 1900, when really no change was perceptible until 1914. In America Walt Whitman had already pointed the way to a new field of poetic expression, but in England no such figure had arisen. The Celtic revival in Ireland, of which an account is contained in the headnote on page II-243, paralleled the similar revival in the eighteenth century under Gray, Macpherson, and Percy, but its influence has spread more by means of the theater than by lyric poetry. Moreover, though it was probably the most considerable literary movement in English literature of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the effect of it has been felt far more in America than in England. Until the time of the World War English lyric poetry continued to follow the double trend of imaginative embodiments of idealism, and psychological embodiments of realism. On the whole, "A. E." (G. W. Russell), A. E. Housman, Masefield, Le Gallienne, de la Mare, Moira O'Neill, Noyes, and Yeats belong to the former group, while Hardy and Kipling—the bulk of whose work fell before 1900—as well as Symons, belong in the latter group. Of this grouping there can easily be criticism, for Masefield and Symons have done work belonging to both groups, but in general it is accurate. The World War tended to synthesize both groups, as did war in the sixteenth century and at the beginning of the nineteenth century. How long this will continue or what it will effect we cannot as yet tell. It is safe to say that at present the greater amount of creative interest in poetry is in America. One final word of caution is needed. In the following selections many noteworthy poets of today are not represented, for the purpose of the present book is not to be inclusive, but to present types and indicate the main currents of the literary stream.

*SIEGFRIED SASSOON (1886-)

THE KISS

To these I turn, in these I trust;
Brother Lead and Sister Steel.
To his blind power I make appeal;
I guard her beauty clean from rust.

He spins and burns and loves the air, 5
And splits a skull to win my praise;
But up the nobly marching days
She glitters naked, cold and fair.

Sweet Sister, grant your soldier this:
That in good fury he may feel 10
The body where he sets his heel
Quail from your downward darting kiss.
(1917)

ABSOLUTION

The anguish of the earth absolves our eyes
Till beauty shines in all that we can see.
War is our scourge; yet war has made us wise,
And, fighting for our freedom, we are free.

Horror of wounds and anger at the foe, 5
And loss of things desired; all these must pass.
We are the happy legion, for we know
Time's but a golden wind that shakes the grass.

There was an hour when we were loath to part
From life we longed to share no less than others. 10
Now, having claimed this heritage of heart,
What need we more, my comrades and my brothers? (1917)

THE TROOPS

Dim, gradual thinning of the shapeless gloom
Shudders to drizzling daybreak that reveals
Disconsolate men who stamp their sodden boots
And turn dulled, sunken faces to the sky
Haggard and hopeless. They, who have beaten down 5
The stale despair of night, must now renew

*A young poet of Anglo-Jewish stock, who now lives in Kent. He served during the World War, and his poems show a mingling of idealism and cynicism common in poems resulting from the War. *The Old Huntsman* (1917) and *Counter-Attack* are his two best-known collections of poetry.

Their desolation in the truce of dawn,
Murdering the livid hours that grope for peace.

Yet these, who cling to life with stubborn hands,
Can grin through storms of death and find a gap 10
In the clawed, cruel tangles of his defense.
They march from safety, and the bird-sung joy
Of grass-green thickets, to the land where all
Is ruin, and nothing blossoms but the sky
That hastens over them where they endure 15
Sad, smoking, flat horizons, reeking woods,
And foundered trench-lines volleying doom for doom.

O my brave brown companions, when your souls
Flock silently away, and the eyeless dead
Shame the wild beast of battle on the ridge, 20
Death will stand grieving in that field of war
Since your unvanquished hardihood is spent.
And through some mooned Valhalla there will pass
Battalions and battalions, scarred from hell; 24
The unreturning army that was youth;
The legions who have suffered and are dust. (1918)

COUNTER-ATTACK

We'd gained our first objective hours before
While dawn broke like a face with blinking eyes,
Pallid, unshaved and thirsty, blind with smoke.
Things seemed all right at first. We held their line,
With bombers posted, Lewis guns well placed, 5
And clink of shovels deepening the shallow trench.
The place was rotten with dead; green clumsy legs
High-booted, sprawled and groveled along the saps;
And trunks, face downward, in the sucking mud,
Wallowed like trodden sand-bags loosely filled; 10
And naked sodden buttocks, mats of hair,
Bulged, clotted heads slept in the plastering slime.
And then the rain began—the jolly old rain!
A yawning soldier knelt against the bank,
Staring across the morning blear with fog; 15
He wondered when the Allemands would get busy;
And then, of course, they started with five-nines
Traversing, sure as fate, and never a dud.
Mute in the clamor of shells he watched them burst
Spouting dark earth and wire with gusts from hell, 20
While posturing giants dissolved in drifts of smoke.
He crouched and flinched, dizzy with galloping fear,
Sick for escape—loathing the strangled horror
And butchered, frantic gestures of the dead.

An officer came blundering down the trench: 25
"Stand-to and man the fire-step!" On he went . . .
Gasping and bawling, "Fire-step . . . counter-attack!"
Then the haze lifted. Bombing on the right
Down the old sap; machine-guns on the left;

23. **Valhalla**, the heavenly abode of Odin, the Norse Zeus, where went the souls of valiant warriors who were slain on the field of battle.

8. **saps**, approach trenches. 17. **five-nines**, German guns firing a 220-pound shell. 18. **dud**, a shell which does not explode on impact as it should.

And stumbling figures looming out in front. 30
"O Christ, they're coming at us!" Bullets spat,
And he remembered his rifle . . . rapid fire . . .
And started blazing wildly . . . then a bang
Crumpled and spun him sideways, knocked him out
To grunt and wriggle. None heeded him; he choked 35
And fought the flapping veils of smothering gloom,
Lost in a blurred confusion of yells and groans . . .
Down, and down, and down, he sank and drowned,
Bleeding to death. The counter-attack had failed.

(1918)

TO ANY DEAD OFFICER

Well, how are things in Heaven? I wish you'd say,
Because I'd like to know that you're all right.
Tell me, have you found everlasting day,
Or been sucked in by everlasting night?
For when I shut my eyes your face shows pain; 5
I hear you make some cheery old remark—
I can rebuild you in my brain,
Though you've gone out patrolling in the dark.

You hated tours of trenches; you were proud
Of nothing more than having good years to spend; 10
Longed to get home and join the careless crowd
Of chaps who work in peace with Time for friend.
That's all washed out now. You're beyond the wire:
No earthly chance can send you crawling back.
You've finished with machine-gun fire—
Knocked over in a hopeless dud-attack. 16

Somehow I always thought you'd get done in,
Because you were so desperate keen to live:
You were all out to try and save your skin,
Well knowing how much the world had got to give. 20
You joked at shells and talked the usual "shop,"
Stuck to your dirty job and did it fine:
With "Jesus Christ! when *will* it stop?
Three years. . . . It's hell unless we break their line."

So when they told me you'd been left for dead 25
I wouldn't believe them, feeling it *must* be true.
Next week the bloody Roll of Honour said
"Wounded and missing." (That's the thing to do
When lads are left in shell-holes dying slow,
With nothing but blank sky and wounds that ache, 30
Moaning for water till they know
It's night, and then it's not worth while to wake!)

. . . . . .

Good-by, old lad! Remember me to God,
And tell Him that our politicians swear
They won't give in till Prussian rule's been trod 35
Under the Heel of England. . . . Are you there? . . .
Yes . . . and the War won't end for at least two years;
But we've got stacks of men. . . . I'm blind with tears,
Staring into the dark. Cheero!
I wish they'd killed you in a decent show.

(1918)

39. **Cheero**, usually *cheerio;* it means "so long" or "good luck."

*JOHN McCRAE (1872-1918)

IN FLANDERS FIELDS

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
  That mark our place; and in the sky,
  The larks, still bravely singing, fly,
Scarce heard amid the guns below. 5

We are the Dead; short days ago
  We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
    In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe! 10
To you from failing hands we throw
  The torch; be yours to hold it high.
  If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
    In Flanders fields.

(1915)

"A. E."
†(GEORGE WILLIAM RUSSELL)
(1862-)

THE MEMORY OF EARTH

In the wet-dusk of silver-sweet,
  Down the violet-scented ways,
As I moved with quiet feet
  I was met by mighty days.

On the hedge the hanging dew 5
  Glassed the eve and stars and skies;
While I gazed a madness grew
  Into thundered battle-cries.

Where the hawthorn glimmered white,
  Flashed the spear and fell the stroke,
Ah, what faces pale and bright 11
  Where the dazzling battle broke!

There a hero-hearted queen
  With young beauty lit the van.
Gone! the darkness flowed between 15
  All the ancient wars of man.

While I paced the valley's gloom,
  Where the rabbits pattered near,
Shone a temple and a tomb
  With a legend carven clear: 20

Time put by a myriad fates
That her day might dawn in glory;
Death made wide a million gates
So to close her tragic story. (1913)

*ALFRED EDWARD HOUSMAN
(1859-)

POEMS FROM A SHROPSHIRE LAD

IV

REVEILLE

Wake! The silver dusk returning
  Up the beach of darkness brims,
And the ship of sunrise burning
  Strands upon the eastern rims.

Wake! The vaulted shadow shatters, 5
  Trampled to the floor it spanned,
And the tent of night in tatters
  Straws the sky-pavilioned land.

Up, lad, up! 'Tis late for lying;
  Hear the drums of morning play; 10
Hark, the empty highways crying,
  "Who'll beyond the hills away?"

II

Towns and countries woo together,
  Forelands beacon, belfries call;
Never lad that trod on leather 15
  Lived to feast his heart with all.

Up, lad! Thews that lie and cumber
  Sunlit pallets never thrive;

*A Canadian physician on the medical staff of McGill University, Montreal, who died of pneumonia in the War. "In Flanders Fields" is supposed to have been written during or shortly after the Battle of the Marne.

†An Irish poet and painter who seems to have been fired rather late by the revival of Irish literature, for much of his best poetry was written after 1900. Wordsworth did not see in Nature what A. E. sees in "The Memory of Earth," but Deirdre knew it (page 61) and many an Irish bard and poet since her time. Cf. "Voices" (page 628) and the four poems from *Last Poems* (page 618).

*The universal admiration for the poetry of A. E. Housman, who is professor of Latin at Cambridge University, and fellow of Trinity College, makes the inference easy that he has made a permanent place for himself in English poetry. His understanding of youth, coupled with an exquisite blending of the best of the English lyric spirit and form with the flavor of Latin lyric poetry, especially that of Horace, has produced in *A Shropshire Lad* and *Last Poems* a group of poems which stand high in the achievement of English lyric poetry. Beauty and pathos are combined with regret at the passing of youth, but with determination to meet bravely whatever Fate may hold in store. Naoise rather than Beowulf would have understood *A Shropshire Lad*, as would Lovelace, who wrote "To Lucasta, Going to the Wars" (page 388). Taken together, *A Shropshire Lad* and *Last Poems* constitute a beautiful memorial to the youth of England.

IV. Reveille. 8. **Straws,** strews.

Morns abed and daylight slumber
  Were not meant for man alive. 20

Clay lies still, but blood's a rover;
  Breath's a ware that will not keep.
Up, lad; when the journey's over
  There'll be time enough to sleep.

V

O see how thick the goldcup flowers
  Are lying in field and lane,
With dandelions to tell the hours
  That never are told again.
O may I squire you round the meads 5
  And pick you posies gay?
—'Twill do no harm to take my arm.
  "You may, young man, you may."

Ah, spring was sent for lass and lad,
  'Tis now the blood runs gold, 10
And man and maid had best be glad
  Before the world is old.
What flowers today may flower tomorrow
  But never as good as new.
—Suppose I wound my arm right round— 15
  "'Tis true, young man, 'tis true."

Some lads there are, 'tis shame to say,
  That only court to thieve,
And once they bear the bloom away
  'Tis little enough they leave. 20
Then keep your heart for men like me
  And safe from trustless chaps.
My love is true and all for you.
  "Perhaps, young man, perhaps."

Oh, look in my eyes, then, can you doubt? 25
  —Why, 'tis a mile from town.
How green the grass is all about!
  We might as well sit down.
—Ah, life, what is it but a flower?
  Why must true lovers sigh? 30
Be kind, have pity, my own, my pretty—
  "Good-by, young man, good-by."

XIII

When I was one-and-twenty
  I heard a wise man say,
"Give crowns and pounds and guineas
  But not your heart away;
Give pearls away and rubies 5
  But keep your fancy free."
But I was one-and-twenty—
  No use to talk to me.

When I was one-and-twenty
  I heard him say again, 10
"The heart out of the bosom
  Was never given in vain;
'Tis paid with sighs a plenty
  And sold for endless rue."
And I am two-and-twenty, 15
  And, oh, 'tis true, 'tis true.

XXXVI

White in the moon the long road lies,
  The moon stands blank above;
White in the moon the long road lies
  That leads me from my love.

Still hangs the hedge without a gust, 5
  Still, still the shadows stay;
My feet upon the moonlit dust
  Pursue the ceaseless way.

The world is round, so travelers tell, 9
  And straight though reach the track;
Trudge on, trudge on, 'twill all be well,
  The way will guide one back.

But ere the circle homeward hies
  Far, far must it remove;
White in the moon the long road lies 15
  That leads me from my love.

LIV

With rue my heart is laden
  For golden friends I had,
For many a rose-lipped maiden
  And many a lightfoot lad.

By brooks too broad for leaping 5
  The lightfoot boys are laid;
The rose-lipped girls are sleeping
  In fields where roses fade.

From LAST POEMS

II

As I gird on for fighting
  My sword upon my thigh,
I think on old ill fortunes
  Of better men than I.

LIV. 1. **rue**, a flower symbolic of mourning.

Think I, the round world over, 5
  What golden lads are low
With hurts not mine to mourn for
  And shames I shall not know.

What evil luck soever
  For me remains in store, 10
'Tis sure much finer fellows
  Have fared much worse before.

So here are things to think on
  That ought to make me brave,
As I strap on for fighting 15
  My sword that will not save.

IX

The chestnut casts his flambeaux, and the flowers
  Stream from the hawthorn on the wind away,
The doors clap to, the pane is blind with showers.
  Pass me the can, lad; there's an end of May.

There's one spoilt spring to scant our mortal lot, 5
  One season ruined of our little store.
May will be fine next year as like as not;
  Oh, aye, but then we shall be twenty-four.

We for a certainty are not the first
  Have sat in taverns while the tempest hurled 10
Their hopeful plans to emptiness, and cursed
  Whatever brute and blackguard made the world.

It is in truth iniquity on high
  To cheat our sentenced souls of aught they crave,
And mar the merriment as you and I 15
  Fare on our long fool's-errand to the grave.

Iniquity it is; but pass the can.
  My lad, no pair of kings our mothers bore;
Our only portion is the estate of man.
  We want the moon, but we shall get no more. 20

IX. 1. **flambeaux**, torches; an allusion to the blossoms of the horse-chestnut trees.

If here today the cloud of thunder lours,
  Tomorrow it will hie on far behests;
The flesh will grieve on other bones than ours
  Soon, and the soul will mourn in other breasts.

The troubles of our proud and angry dust 25
  Are from eternity, and shall not fail.
Bear them we can, and if we can we must.
  Shoulder the sky, my lad, and drink your ale.

XXXII

When I would muse in boyhood
  The wild green woods among,
And nurse resolves and fancies
  Because the world was young,
It was not foes to conquer, 5
  Nor sweethearts to be kind,
But it was friends to die for
  That I would seek and find.

I sought them far and found them,
  The sure, the straight, the brave— 10
The hearts I lost my own to,
  The souls I could not save.
They braced their belts about them,
  They crossed in ships the sea,
They sought and found six feet of ground, 15
  And there they died for me.

XXXIX

When summer's end is nighing,
  And skies at evening cloud,
I muse on change and fortune
  And all the feats I vowed
  When I was young and proud. 5

The weathercock at sunset
  Would lose the slanted ray,
And I would climb the beacon
  That looked to Wales away
  And saw the last of day. 10

From hill and cloud and heaven
  The hues of evening died;
Night welled through lane and hollow
  And hushed the countryside,
  But I had youth and pride. 15

And I with earth and nightfall
  In converse high would stand,
Late, till the west was ashen
  And darkness hard at hand,
  And the eye lost the land. 20

The year might age, and cloudy
  The lessening day might close,
But air of other summers
  Breathed from beyond the snows,
  And I had hope of those. 25

They came and were and are not
  And come no more anew;
And all the years and seasons
  That ever can ensue
  Must now be worse and few. 30

So here's an end of roaming
  On eves when autumn nighs;
The ear too fondly listens
  For summer's parting sighs,
  And then the heart replies. (1922)

*RUPERT BROOKE (1887-1915)

MENELAUS AND HELEN

I

Hot through Troy's ruin Menelaus broke
  To Priam's palace, sword in hand, to sate
  On that adulterous whore a ten years' hate
And a king's honor. Through red death, and smoke,
And cries, and then by quieter ways he strode, 5
  Till the still innermost chamber fronted him.
  He swung his sword, and crashed into the dim
Luxurious bower, flaming like a god.

High sat white Helen, lonely and serene.
  He had not remembered that she was so fair, 10
And that her neck curved down in such a way;
And he felt tired. He flung the sword away,
  And kissed her feet, and knelt before her there,
The perfect knight before the perfect queen.

II

So far the poet. How should he behold
  That journey home, the long connubial years? 16
  He does not tell you how white Helen bears
Child on legitimate child, becomes a scold,
Haggard with virtue. Menelaus bold
  Waxed garrulous, and sacked a hundred Troys 20
  'Twixt noon and supper. And her golden voice
Got shrill as he grew deafer. And both were old.

Often he wonders why on earth he went
  Troyward, or why poor Paris ever came.
Oft she weeps, gummy-eyed and impotent; 25
  Her dry shanks twitch at Paris' mumbled name.
So Menelaus nagged, and Helen cried;
And Paris slept on by Scamander side.
(1911)

NINETEEN-FOURTEEN

I—PEACE

Now, God be thanked who has matched us with his hour,
  And caught our youth, and wakened us from sleeping,
With hand made sure, clear eye, and sharpened power,
  To turn, as swimmers into cleanness leaping,

*Brooke was a healthy, brilliant boy, who excelled both in athletics and studies. He was the son of the Assistant-Headmaster of Rugby. After graduating from Cambridge, he traveled through America and Canada to the islands of the South Seas. He was an adventurous rover and idealist. When the war came he served both in France and in the Dardenelles, where he died. He is buried on the Island of Skyros. His early poems flamed with the beauty of youth. The War unified both his purpose and his poetic forces, as the "Nineteen-Fourteen Sonnets" show. They have in them the best of the English lyric spirit, and their beauty of expression places them in the first rank of English sonnets. His poems have been collected in one volume.

Menelaus and Helen. Contrast with "Helen of Troy" (page 692) and "When Helen First Saw Wrinkles in Her Face" (page 480).

28. **Scamander**, a river near Troy.

Glad from a world grown old and cold and weary,
Leave the sick hearts that honor could not move,
And half-men, and their dirty songs and dreary,
And all the little emptiness of love!
Oh! we, who have known shame, we have found release there,
Where there's no ill, no grief, but sleep has mending,
Naught broken save this body, lost but breath;
Nothing to shake the laughing heart's long peace there,
But only agony, and that has ending;
And the worst friend and enemy is but Death.

II—SAFETY

Dear! of all happy in the hour, most blest
He who has found our hid security,
Assured in the dark tides of the world that rest,
And heard our word, "Who is so safe as we?"
We have found safety with all things undying:
The winds, and morning, tears of men and mirth,
The deep night, and birds singing, and clouds flying,
And sleep, and freedom, and the autumnal earth.
We have built a house that is not for Time's throwing.
We have gained a peace unshaken by pain forever.
War knows no power. Safe shall be my going,
Secretly armed against all death's endeavor;
Safe though all safety's lost; safe where men fall;
And if these poor limbs die, safest of all.

III—THE DEAD

Blow out, you bugles, over the rich Dead!
There's none of these so lonely and poor of old,
But, dying, has made us rarer gifts than gold.
These laid the world away; poured out the red
Sweet wine of youth; gave up the years to be
Of work and joy, and that unhoped serene
That men call age; and those who would have been
Their sons they gave, their immortality.
Blow, bugles, blow! They brought us, for our dearth,
Holiness, lacked so long, and Love, and Pain.
Honor has come back, as a king, to earth,
And paid his subjects with a royal wage;
And Nobleness walks in our ways again;
And we have come into our heritage.

IV—THE DEAD

These hearts were woven of human joys and cares,
Washed marvelously with sorrow, swift to mirth.
The years had given them kindness. Dawn was theirs,
And sunset, and the colors of the earth.
These had seen movement, and heard music; known
Slumber and waking; loved; gone proudly friended;
Felt the quick stir of wonder; sat alone;
Touched flowers and furs and cheeks. All this is ended.
There are waters blown by changing winds to laughter
And lit by the rich skies, all day. And after,
Frost, with a gesture, stays the waves that dance
And wandering loveliness. He leaves a white
Unbroken glory, a gathered radiance,
A width, a shining peace, under the night.

V—THE SOLDIER

If I should die, think only this of me:
  That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is forever England. There shall be
  In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware, 5
  Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's, breathing English air,
  Washed by the rivers, blessed by suns of home.
And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
  A pulse in the eternal mind, no less 10
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
  Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
And laughter, learned of friends; and gentleness,
  In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

VI—THE TREASURE

When color goes home into the eyes,
  And lights that shine are shut again
With dancing girls and sweet birds' cries
  Behind the gateways of the brain;
And that no-place which gave them birth shall close 5
The rainbow and the rose—

Still may Time hold some golden space
  Where I'll unpack that scented store
Of song and flower and sky and face,
  And count, and touch, and turn them o'er, 10
Musing upon them; as a mother, who
Has watched her children all the rich day through,
Sits, quiet-handed, in the fading light,
When children sleep, ere night. (1915)

The Treasure. Cf. "As in a Rose-Jar" (page 706).

*WILFRID WILSON GIBSON
(1878-)

Poems From BATTLE

†THE RETURN

He went, and he was gay to go;
And I smiled on him as he went.
My son—'twas well he couldn't know
My darkest dread, nor what it meant—

Just what it meant to smile and smile 5
And let my son go cheerily—
My son . . . and wondering all the while
What stranger would come back to me.

†COMRADES

As I was marching in Flanders
A ghost kept step with me—
Kept step with me and chuckled
And muttered ceaselessly:

"Once I, too, marched in Flanders, 5
The very spit of you,
And just a hundred years since,
To fall at Waterloo.

"They buried me in Flanders
Upon the field of blood, 10
And long I've lain forgotten
Deep in the Flemish mud.

"But now you march in Flanders,
The very spit of me;
To the ending of the day's march 15
I'll bear you company."

†HIT

Out of the sparkling sea
I drew my tingling body clear, and lay
On a low ledge the livelong summer day,
Basking, and watching lazily
White sails in Falmouth Bay. 5

*Gibson reflects industrial conditions in England more than any other poet. For some time he lived with the working people, as some of his books of poems—*Daily Bread* and *Fires*—show. In the war he served as a private, and the series of poems called *Battle* represents a phase of realism not touched by Brooke, though known to Sassoon.

†Reprinted from *Collected Poems*, 1917, by permission of The Macmillan Company.

My body seemed to burn
Salt in the sun that drenched it through and through
Till every particle glowed clean and new
And slowly seemed to turn
To lucent amber in a world of blue. 10

I felt a sudden wrench—
A trickle of warm blood—
And found that I was sprawling in the mud
Among the dead men in the trench.

*VICTORY

I watched it oozing quietly
Out of the gaping gash.
The lads thrust on to victory
With lunge and curse and crash.

Half-dazed, that uproar seemed to me
Like some old battle-sound 6
Heard long ago, as quietly
His blood soaked in the ground.

The lads thrust on to victory
With lunge and crash and shout. 10
I lay and watched, as quietly
His life was running out. (1915)

†JOHN MASEFIELD (1874-)

‡SEA-FEVER

I must down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by,
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,
And a gray mist on the sea's face and a gray dawn breaking.

I must down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide 5
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.

I must down to the seas again to the vagrant gypsy life,
To the gull's way and the whale's way, where the wind's like a whetted knife; 10
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over. (1913)

*THE WEST WIND

It's a warm wind, the west wind, full of birds' cries;
I never hear the west wind but tears are in my eyes.
For it comes from the west lands, the old brown hills,
And April's in the west wind, and daffodils.

It's a fine land, the west land, for hearts as tired as mine, 5
Apple orchards blossom there, and the air's like wine.
There is cool green grass there, where men may lie at rest,
And the thrushes are in song there, fluting from the nest.

"Will you not come home, brother? You have been long away.
It's April, and blossom time, and white is the spray; 10
And bright is the sun, brother, and warm is the rain—
Will you not come home, brother, home to us again?

"The young corn is green, brother, where the rabbits run;
It's blue sky, and white clouds, and warm rain and sun.
It's song to a man's soul, brother, fire to a man's brain, 15
To hear the wild bees and see the merry spring again.

*Reprinted from *Collected Poems*, 1917, by permission of The Macmillan Company.

†See headnote on Masefield on page 315. The emotion with which Masefield invests the simple scenes of life is amazing and beautiful. He has not the pathos of Housman, but he has a more vigorous and romantic view of life. Masefield's poems both lyric and narrative, prior to 1914, may be had in two volumes of collected poems and plays.

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*Reprinted from *Collected Poems*, 1918, by permission of The Macmillan Company.

"Larks are singing in the west, brother,
above the green wheat,
So will you not come home, brother, and
rest your tired feet?
I've a balm for bruised hearts, brother,
sleep for aching eyes,"
Says the warm wind, the west wind,
full of birds' cries. 20

It's the white road westwards is the road
I must tread
To the green grass, the cool grass, and
rest for heart and head,
To the violets and the brown brooks and
the thrushes' song
In the fine land, the west land, the land
where I belong. (1913)

*ON GROWING OLD

Be with me, Beauty, for the fire is dying,
My dog and I are old, too old for roving;
Man, whose young passion sets the
spindrift flying,
Is soon too lame to march, too cold for
loving.

I take the book and gather to the fire, 5
Turning old yellow leaves; minute by
minute,
The clock ticks to my heart; a withered
wire
Moves a thin ghost of music in the
spinet.

I cannot sail your seas, I cannot wander
Your cornland nor your hill-land nor
your valleys, 10
Ever again, nor share the battle yonder
Where the young knight the broken
squadron rallies.

Only stay quiet while my mind re-
members
The beauty of fire from the beauty of
embers.

Beauty, have pity, for the strong have
power, 15
The rich their wealth, the beautiful their
grace,
Summer of man its sunlight and its
flower,
Springtime of man all April in a face.

Only, as in the jostling in the Strand,
Where the mob thrusts or loiters or is
loud, 20
The beggar with the saucer in his hand
Asks only a penny from the passing
crowd,

So, from this glittering world with all its
fashion,
Its fire and play of men, its stir, its
march,
Let me have wisdom, Beauty, wisdom
and passion, 25
Bread to the soul, rain where the sum-
mers parch.

Give me but these, and though the
darkness close,
Even the night will blossom as the rose.
(1913)

*Reprinted from *Collected Poems*, 1918, by permission of The Macmillan Company.

3. **spindrift**, windblown sea spray.

*ARTHUR SYMONS (1865-)

AMORIS VICTIMA

I

He who has entered by this sorrow's
door
Is neither dead nor living any more.
Nothing can touch me now, except the
cold
Of whitening years that slowly make
youth old;
Hunger, that makes the body faint; one
thought 5
That ends all memory; for the future,
naught.
My future ended yesterday; I have
Only a past, on this side of the grave.
For I have lost you, and you fill the
whole
Of life now lost; and I have lost my soul,
Because I have no part or lot in things

19. **the Strand**, a busy thoroughfare in London.

*Arthur Symons was born of Welsh parents, received a private education, and has spent most of his life in traveling and writing. The poetry of Symons shows a deep and sensitive appreciation of such modern French poets as Verlaine and Beaudelaire; it is highly emotional, subtle, and erotic. In 1902 he selected two volumes of his verse, entitled *Poems*. The following selections are from two groups of love poems, "Amoris Victima" (The Victim of Love), and "Amoris Exsul" (The Exile of Love). The poems should be compared with "Sonnet from Idea" (page 360), and with "Modern Love" (page 575).

That were to be immortal. Grave-mold clings 12
About my very thoughts; and love's dead, too.
All that I know of love I learned of you.

II

All that I know of love I learned of you,
And I know all that lover ever knew,
Since, passionately loving to be loved,
The subtlety of your wise body moved
My senses to a curiosity, 5
And your wise heart adorned itself for me.
Did you not teach me how to love you, how
To win you, how to suffer for you now,
Since you have made, as long as life endures, 9
My very nerves, my very senses, yours?
I suffer for you now with that same skill
Of self-consuming ecstasy, whose thrill
(May Death some day the thought of it remove!)
You gathered from the very hands of Love.

III

Is it this weary and most constant heart,
Or only these unquiet nerves, that start
And tremble if I do but think of you?
I know not, but I would to God I knew.
Had I not once a half-delicious grief, 5
When I believed in you against belief?
But now, when I must doubt your word, your kiss,
When each remembered rapture murmurs, "This
Was when she lied, and this was when she lied,"
Yet even doubt is by some doubt denied;
Now, when the madness comes down like a flood, 11
Poisoning the honest currents of my blood,
Is it desire, love, or this madness, most
That aches in me, to know that you are lost?

IV

I know that you are lost to me, and yet
I will not think it. If I could but get
This too obsequious heart out of your power
For one forgetting and contracted hour,
This heart that from remembrance has not won 5
Oblivion or even rebellion!
I must not think; there's safety that one way.
I must not think of you, not even to say,
"I have forgotten." I will think of—who?
All other women, since they are not you!
Ah! but that's weakness; can I not be strong, 11
As you are, in your rage to do me wrong?
O! lest I hate you, let my love have power,
For love's sake, to forget you for one hour!

V

Love turns to hate, they say; and surely I
Have cause enough to hate you till I die.
Do you not hate me? must I not hate you?
Show me the way it's done, and I'll outdo
Your bravest. But what's this? If I surprise, 5
Not tears, in those inexorable eyes?
Ah! by those tears, think not that we shall bring
So dear a love to be an outcast thing.
Love turns to hate; I would it turned to hate!
We were not then so wholly desolate. 10
You will not let me love you; yet now, see,
If hate be not impossibility.
What shall we do, O God in heaven above,
Who cannot hate, and yet who may not love! (1901)

AMORIS EXSUL

IX. REMEMBRANCE

It seems to me that very long ago,
Across a shining and dividing sea,
I dreamed of love, and the eternal woe,
And that desire which is eternity.

I did but dream that I have made you weep—
I never loved, and you have never wept;
The shining and dividing sea is deep,
And I am very tired of having slept.

Yet, in some hours of these oblivious days,
Suddenly, like a heart-throb, I recall
The passionate enigma of your face;
I take your hand, and I remember all.

XIV. THE WANDERERS

Wandering, ever wandering,
Their eyelids freshened with the wind of the sea
Blown up the cliffs at sunset, their cheeks cooled
With meditative shadows of hushed leaves
That have been drowsing in the woods all day
And certain fires of sunrise in their eyes.

They wander, and the white roads under them
Crumble into fine dust behind their feet,
For they return not; life, a long white road,
Winds ever from the dark into the dark,
And they, as days, return not; they go on
Forever, with the traveling stars; the night
Curtains them, being wearied, and the dawn
Awakens them unwearied; they go on.
They know the winds of all the earth, they know
The dust of many highways, and the stones
Of cities set for landmarks on the road.
Theirs is the world, and all the glory of it,
Theirs, because they forego it, passing on
Into the freedom of the elements;
Wandering, ever wandering,
Because life holds not anything so good
As to be free of yesterday, and bound
Toward a newborn tomorrow; and they go
Into a world of unknown faces, where,
It may be, there are faces waiting them,
Faces of friendly strangers, not the long
Intolerable monotony of friends.

The joy of earth is yours, O wanderers,
The only joy of the old earth, to wake.
As each new dawn is patiently renewed,
With foreheads fresh against a fresh young sky.
To be a little further on the road,
A little nearer somewhere, some few steps
Advanced into the future, and removed
By some few counted milestones from the past;
God gives you this good gift, the only gift
That God, being repentant, has to give.

Wanderers, you have the sunrise and the stars;
And we, beneath our comfortable roofs,
Lamplight, and daily fire upon the hearth,
And four walls of a prison, and sure food.
But God has given you freedom, wanderers! (1901)

The Wanderers. It is startling that this subtle, polished English poet should here have expressed a mood of roaming which is also found in the simple, vigorous, primitive Whitman.

*RICHARD LE GALLIENNE
(1866-)

AN ECHO FROM HORACE

†LUSISTI EST, ET EDISTI, ATQUE BIBISTI; TEMPUS ABIRE, TIBI EST.

Take away the dancing girls, quench the lights, remove
Golden cups and garlands sear, all the feast; away

*Richard Le Gallienne is by birth English, and by residence American. In early life he was in business, but turned to literature. Of his numerous books about half were published before 1900 and half afterwards. He follows both the classical and the romantic tradition with great charm, as the following poems show. The first is "An Echo from Horace"; the other three owe much to French poetry, both classical and contemporary. *A Jongleur Stray'd* and *The Junkman* are his two most recent collections of poetry.

†**Lusisti**, etc., adapted from Horace, Ep. II. 2, 214, 215, "thou hast played and eaten and drunk; it is time for thee to go."

Lutes and lyres and Lalage; close the gates, above
Write upon the lintel this: *Time is done for play!*
Thou hast had thy fill of love, eaten, drunk; the show 5
Ends at last; 'twas long enough—time it is to go.

Thou hast played—ah! heart, how long! —past all count were they,
Girls of gold and ivory, bosomed deep, all snow,
Leopard swift, and velvet loined, bronze for hair, wild clay
Turning at a touch to flame, tense as a strong bow, 10
Cruel as the circling hawk, tame at last as dove—
Thou hast had thy fill and more than enough of love.

Thou hast eaten: peacock's tongues; fed thy carp with slaves;
Nests of Asiatic birds, brought from far Cathay;
Umbrian boars, and mullet roes snatched from stormy waves. 15
Half thy father's lands have gone one strange meal to pay;
For a morsel on thy plate ravished sea and shore;
Thou hast eaten—'tis enough, thou shalt eat no more.

Thou hast drunk—how hast thou drunk! mighty vats, whole seas;
Vineyards purpling half a world turned to gold thy throat, 20
Falernian, true Massic; the gods' own vintages.
Lakes thou hast swallowed deep enough galleys tall to float;
Wildness, wonder, wisdom, all, drunkenness divine,
All that dreams within the grape, madness too, were thine.

Time it is to go and sleep—draw the curtains close— 25
Tender strings shall lull thee still, mellow flutes be blown;
Still the spring shall shower down on thy couch the rose,
Still the laurels crown thine head, where thou dreamest alone.
Thou didst play, and thou didst eat, thou hast drunken deep,
Time at last it is to go, time it is to sleep.

(1922)

3. **Lalage**, one of the many girls, fictitious or real, whom the Roman poet Horace addresses in his Odes. 13. **eaten**, alluding to the elaborate and expensive feasts of the wealthy Romans. 21. **Falernian, true Massic**, vintages especially esteemed by the Romans.

BALLADE OF THE OLDEST DUEL IN THE WORLD

A battered swordsman, slashed and scarred,
I scarce had thought to fight again,
But love of the old game dies hard,
So to't, my lady, if you're fain!
I'm scarce the mettle to refrain, 5
I'll ask no quarter from your art—
But what if we should both be slain!
I fight you, darling, for your heart.

I warn you, though, be on your guard,
Nor an old swordsman's craft disdain, 10
He jests at scars—what saith the Bard?
Love's wounds are real, and fierce the pain;
If we should die of love, we twain!
You laugh—*en garde* then—so we start;
Cyrano-like, here's my refrain: 15
I fight you, darling, for your heart.

If compliments I interlard
'Twixt feint and lunge, you'll not complain;
Lacking your eyes, the night's unstarred,
The rose is beautiful in vain, 20
In vain smells sweet—Rose-in-the-Brain,

Ballade of the Oldest Duel in the World. A *ballade* is a French verse form where three or four rimes persist throughout the three stanzas and envoi of the poem. Each stanza has eight or ten lines and the envoi (farewell) four. The end of each stanza and the envoi have the same refrain. This poem follows the spirit of a ballade composed by Cyrano de Bergerac, in the first act of Rostand's drama of that name, while the hero fights a duel. 11. **He jests at scars**, "who never felt a wound." The first words Romeo utters on entering Capulet's garden. *Romeo and Juliet*, II, ii. **Bard**, Shakespeare. 14. **en garde**, on guard; a fencing term.

Dizzying the world—a touch! sweet smart!—
Only the *envoi* doth remain:
I fight you, darling, for your heart.

ENVOI

Princess, I'm yours; the rose-red rain 25
Pours from my side—but see! I dart
Within your guard—poor pretty stain!
I fight you, darling, for your heart.
(1922)

MAY IS BACK

May is back, and you and I
Are at the stream again—
The leaves are out,
And all about
The building birds begin 5
To make a merry din.
May is back, and you and I
Are at the dream again.

May is back, and you and I
Lie in the grass again— 10
The butterfly
Flits painted by;
The bee brings sudden fear,
Like people talking near.
May is back, and you and I 15
Are lad and lass again.

May is back, and you and I
Are heart to heart again—
In God's green house
We make our vows 20
Of summer love that stays
Faithful through winter days.
May is back, and you and I
Shall never part again.
(1922)

SONG

My eyes upon your eyes—
So was I born,
One far-off day in Paradise,
A summer morn;
I had not lived till then, 5
But, wildered, went,
Like other wandering men,
Nor what Life meant
Knew I till then.
My hand within your hand— 10
So would I live,
Nor would I ask to understand
Why God did give
Your loveliness to me,
But I would pray 15
Worthier of it to be,
By night and day,
Unworthy me!

My heart upon your heart—
So would I die; 20
I cannot think that God will part
Us, you and I—
The work he did, undo,
That summer morn;
I lived, and would die, too, 25
Where I was born,
Beloved, in you. (1922)

*WALTER de la MARE (1873-)

SHADOW

Even the beauty of the rose doth cast,
When its bright, fervid noon is past,
A still and lengthening shadow in the dust,
Till darkness come
And take its strange dream home. 5

The transient bubbles of the water paint
'Neath their frail arch a shadow faint;
The golden nimbus of the windowed saint,
Till shine the stars,
Casts pale and trembling bars. 10

The loveliest thing earth hath, a shadow hath,
A dark and livelong hint of death,
Haunting it ever till its last faint breath.
Who, then, may tell
The beauty of heaven's shadowless asphodel? (1906)

VOICES

Who is it calling by the darkened river
Where the moss lies smooth and deep,
And the dark trees lean unmoving arms,

*An imaginative poet of childhood, many of whose lyrics have been set to music. Their ethereal yet simple quality makes them in some respects akin to Blake's poems, but they seem even more like the poems of Thomas S. Jones, Jr. (page 706).

Shadow. 15. **asphodel**, a flower supposed to grow in the Greek heaven.

Silent and vague in sleep.
And the bright-heeled constellations pass 5
In splendor through the gloom;
Who is it calling o'er the darkened river
In music, "Come!"?

Who is it wandering in the summer meadows
Where the children stoop and play 10
In the green faint-scented flowers, spinning
The guileless hours away?
Who touches their bright hair? who puts
A wind-shell to each cheek,
Whispering betwixt its breathing silences, 15
"Seek! seek!"?

Who is it watching in the gathering twilight
When the curfew bird hath flown
On eager wings, from song to silence,
To its darkened nest alone? 20
Who takes for brightening eyes the stars,
For locks the still moonbeam,
Sighs through the dews of evening peacefully
Falling, "Dream!"? (1906)

*"MOIRA O'NEILL"

†A BROKEN SONG

"*Where am I from*?" From the green hills of Erin.
"*Have I no song then*?" My songs are all sung.
"*What o' my love*?" 'Tis alone I am farin'.
Old grows my heart, an' my voice yet is young.
"*If she was tall*?" Like a king's own daughter. 5
"*If she was fair*?" Like a mornin' o' May.
When she'd come laughin' 'twas the runnin' wather,
When she'd come blushin' 'twas the break o' day.
"*Where did she dwell*?" Where one'st I had my dwellin.'
"*Who loved her best*?" There, no one now will know. 10
"*Where is she gone*?" Och, why would I be tellin'!
Where she is gone, there I can never go. (1900)

*"Moira O'Neill" is the pen name of Mrs. Nesta Higginson Skrine, who was born in County Antrim and still lives there at Cushendall. She is one of the poets of the Celtic revival who draws her inspiration from the Irish folk and their legends. The untold story of "A Broken Song" may be compared effectively with the sixteenth-century anonymous lyric, "As Ye Came from the Holy Land" (page 348).

†Reprinted from *Songs from the Glens of Antrim*, by permission of The Macmillan Company.

*ALFRED NOYES (1880-)

†THE BARREL-ORGAN

There's a barrel-organ caroling across a golden street
In the City as the sun sinks low;
And the music's not immortal; but the world has made it sweet
And fulfilled it with the sunset glow;
And it pulses through the pleasures of the City and the pain 5
That surround the singing organ like a large eternal light;
And they've given it a glory and a part to play again
In the Symphony that rules the day and night.

And now it's marching onward through the realms of old romance, 9
And trolling out a fond familiar tune,
And now it's roaring cannon down to fight the king of France,
And now it's prattling softly to the moon.
And all around the organ there's a sea without a shore
Of human joys and wonders and regrets;
To remember and to recompense the music evermore 15
For what the cold machinery forgets.

*Alfred Noyes is well known personally in America because of his sojourn at Princeton as Professor of Poetry from 1913-1923. He was an Oxford crew man who excelled in literature and has devoted his life to it. His poetry manifests a healthy and vigorous romanticism which draws its inspiration from the past, as in *Tales of the Mermaid Tavern* and "Drake," or from the present, as in "The Barrel-Organ" and "A Victory Dance." Noyes is no searcher of souls, like Browning, but he seeks beauty, and succeeds in finding it about him everywhere. "A Victory Dance" shows the cynical result of the war upon the survivors. Cf. "To Any Dead Officer" (page 616). The collected poems of Noyes in three volumes contain most of his work.

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Yes; as the music changes,
Like a prismatic glass,
It takes the light and ranges
Through all the moods that pass; 20
Dissects the common carnival
Of passions and regrets,
And gives the world a glimpse of all
The colors it forgets.

And there *La Traviata* sighs 25
Another sadder song;
And there *Il Trovatore* cries
A tale of deeper wrong;
And bolder knights to battle go
With sword and shield and lance 30
Than ever here on earth below
Have whirled into—*a dance!*—

Go down to Kew in lilac time, in lilac time, in lilac time;
Go down to Kew in lilac time (it isn't far from London!)
And you shall wander hand in hand with love in summer's wonderland; 35
Go down to Kew in lilac time (it isn't far from London!)

The cherry-trees are seas of bloom and soft perfume and sweet perfume,
The cherry-trees are seas of bloom (and oh, so near to London!)
And there, they say, when dawn is high and all the wold's a blaze of sky
The cuckoo, though he's very shy, will sing a song for London. 40

The Dorian nightingale is rare and yet they say you'll hear him there
At Kew, at Kew in lilac time (and oh, so near to London!)
The linnet and the throstle, too, and after dark the long halloo
And golden-eyed *tu-whit*, *tu-whoo*, of owls that ogle London.

For Noah hardly knew a bird of any kind that isn't heard 45
At Kew, at Kew in lilac time (and oh, so near to London!)
And when the rose begins to pout and all the chestnut spires are out
You'll hear the rest without a doubt, all chorusing for London:

Come down to Kew in lilac time, in lilac time, in lilac time;
Come down to Kew in lilac time (it isn't far from London!) 50
And you shall wander hand in hand with love in summer's wonderland;
Come down to Kew in lilac time (it isn't far from London!)

And then the troubadour begins to thrill the golden street,
In the City as the sun sinks low;
And in all the gaudy busses there are scores of weary feet 55
Marking time, sweet time, with a dull mechanic beat,
And a thousand hearts are plunging to a love they'll never meet,
Through the meadows of the sunset, through the poppies and the wheat,
In the land where the dead dreams go.

Verdi, Verdi, when you wrote *Il Trovatore* did you dream 60
Of the City when the sun sinks low,
Of the organ and the monkey and the many-colored stream
On the Piccadilly pavement, of the myriad eyes that seem
To be litten for the moment with a wild Italian gleam
As *A che la morte* parodies the world's eternal theme 65
And pulses with the sunset glow?

There's a thief, perhaps, that listens with a face of frozen stone
In the City as the sun sinks low;
There's a portly man of business with a balance of his own;
There's a clerk and there's a butcher of a soft reposeful tone; 70
And they're all of them returning to the heavens they have known;
They are crammed and jammed in busses and—they're each of them alone
In the land where the dead dreams go.

There's a very modish woman and her smile is very bland
In the City as the sun sinks low; 75
And her hansom jingles onward, but her little jeweled hand

25, 27. **La Traviata, Il Trovatore,** operas by Verdi. 39. **wold,** plain or low hill. 41. **Dorian,** pertaining to southern Greece.

65. **A che la morte,** part of the famous "Miserere" in *Il Trovatore.*

Is clenched a little tighter, and she cannot understand
What she wants or why she wanders to that undiscovered land,
For the parties there are not at all the sort of thing she planned,
In the land where the dead dreams go. 80

There's a rowing man that listens and his heart is crying out
In the City as the sun sinks low;
For the barge, the eight, the Isis, and the coach's whoop and shout,
For the minute-gun, the counting and the long disheveled rout,
For the howl along the towpath and a fate that's still in doubt, 85
For a roughened oar to handle and a race to think about
In the land where the dead dreams go.

There's a laborer that listens to the voices of the dead
In the City as the sun sinks low;
And his hand begins to tremble and his face to smolder red 90
As he sees a loafer watching him and—there he turns his head
And stares into the sunset where his April love is fled,
For he hears her softly singing and his lonely soul is led
Through the land where the dead dreams go.

There's an old and haggard demi-rep, it's ringing in her ears, 95
In the City as the sun sinks low;
With the wild and empty sorrow of the love that blights and sears,
Oh, and if she hurries onward, then be sure, be sure she hears,
Hears and bears the bitter burden of the unforgotten years,
And her laugh's a little harsher and her eyes are brimmed with tears 100
For the land where the dead dreams go.

There's a barrel-organ caroling across a golden street
In the City as the sun sinks low;
Though the music's only Verdi, there's a world to make it sweet,

83. **Isis.** The Thames near Oxford bears this name. The Oxford crews practice on it.

Just as yonder yellow sunset where the earth and heaven meet 105
Mellows all the sooty City! Hark, a hundred thousand feet
Are marching on to glory through the poppies and the wheat
In the land where the dead dreams go.

So it's Jeremiah, Jeremiah,
What have you to say 110
When you meet the garland girls
Tripping on their way?

All around my gala hat
I wear a wreath of roses
(A long and lonely year it is 115
I've waited for the May!).
If anyone should ask you,
The reason why I wear it is—
My own love, my true love
Is coming home today. 120

And it's buy a bunch of violets for the lady
(*It's lilac time in London; it's lilac time in London!*)
Buy a bunch of violets for the lady
While the sky burns blue above.

On the other side the street you'll find it shady 125
(*It's lilac time in London; it's lilac time in London!*)
But buy a bunch of violets for the lady,
And tell her she's your own true love.

There's a barrel-organ caroling across a golden street
In the City as the sun sinks glittering and slow; 130
And the music's not immortal; but the world has made it sweet
And enriched it with the harmonies that make a song complete
In the deeper heavens of music where the night and morning meet,
As it dives into the sunset glow;
And it pulses through the pleasures of the City and the pain 135
That surround the singing organ like a large eternal light,
And they've given it a glory and a part to play again
In the Symphony that rules the day and night.

And there, as the music changes,
The song runs round again. 140
Once more it turns and ranges
Through all its joy and pain,
Bisects the common carnival
Of passions and regrets;
And the wheeling world remembers all 145
The wheeling song forgets.

Once more *La Traviata* sighs
Another sadder song;
Once more *Il Trovatore* cries
A tale of deeper wrong; 150
Once more the knights to battle go
With sword and shield and lance
Till once, once more, the shattered foe
Has whirled into—*a dance!*

Come down to Kew in lilac time, in lilac time, in lilac time; 155
Come down to Kew in lilac time (it isn't far from London!)
And you shall wander hand in hand with love in summer's wonderland;
Come down to Kew in lilac time (it isn't far from London!) (1904)

*A VICTORY DANCE

The cymbals crash,
And the dancers walk,
With long silk stockings
And arms of chalk,
Butterfly skirts, 5
And white breasts bare,
And shadows of dead men
Watching 'em there.

Shadows of dead men
Stand by the wall, 10
Watching the fun
Of the Victory Ball.
They do not reproach,
Because they know
If they're forgotten, 15
It's better so.

Under the dancing
Feet are the graves.
Dazzle and motley,
In long bright waves, 20
Brushed by the palm-fronds
Grapple and whirl
Ox-eyed matron,
And slim white girl.

Fat wet bodies 25
Go waddling by,
Girdled with satin,
Though God knows why;
Gripped by satyrs
In white and black, 30
With a fat wet hand
On the fat wet back.

See, there is one child
Fresh from school,
Learning the ropes 35
As the old hands rule.
God, how that dead boy
Gapes and grins
As the tom-toms bang
And the shimmy begins. 40

"What did you think
We should find," said a shade,
"When the last shot echoed
And peace was made"?
"Christ," laughed the fleshless 45
Jaws of his friend,
"I thought they'd be praying
For worlds to mend,

"Making earth better,
Or something silly, 50
Like whitewashing hell
Or Picca-dam-dilly.
They've a sense of humor,
These women of ours,
These exquisite lilies, 55
These fresh young flowers!"

"Pish," said a statesman
Standing near,
"I'm glad they can busy
Their thoughts elsewhere! 60
We mustn't reproach 'em;
They're young, you see."
"Ah," said the dead men,
"So were we!"

Victory! Victory! 65
On with the dance!
Back to the jungle
The new beasts prance!

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52. **Picca-dam-dilly.** Piccadilly is a fashionable London thoroughfare.

God, how the dead men
Grin by the wall, 70
Watching the fun
Of the Victory Ball. (1920)

*WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS (1865-)

†THE LAKE ISLE OF INNISFREE

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;
Nine bean rows will I have there, a hive for the honey bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow, 5
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a-glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening's full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore; 10
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements gray,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.
(1906)

†THE ROSE OF THE WORLD

Who dreamed that beauty passes like a dream?
For these red lips, with all their mournful pride,
Mournful that no new wonder may betide,
Troy passed away in one high funeral gleam,
And Usna's children died. 5

We and the laboring world are passing by;
Amid men's souls, that waver and give place,
Like the pale waters in their wintry race,
Under the passing stars, foam of the sky,
Lives on this lonely face. 10

Bow down, archangels, in your dim abode;
Before you were or any hearts to beat,
Weary and kind one lingered by His seat;
He made the world to be a grassy road
Before her wandering feet. (1906)

*HE REMEMBERS FORGOTTEN BEAUTY

When my arms wrap you round I press
My heart upon the loveliness
That has long faded from the world;
The jeweled crowns that kings have hurled
In shadowy pools, when armies fled; 5
The love-tales wrought with silken thread
By dreaming ladies upon cloth
That has made fat the murderous moth;
The roses that of old time were
Woven by ladies in their hair; 10
The dew-cold lilies ladies bore
Through many a sacred corridor
Where such gray clouds of incense rose
That only the gods' eyes did not close.
For that pale breast and lingering hand 15
Come from a more dream-heavy land,
A more dream-heavy hour than this;
And when you sigh from kiss to kiss
I hear white Beauty sighing, too,
For hours when all must fade like dew 20
But flame on flame, deep under deep,
Throne over throne, where in half sleep
Their swords upon their iron knees
Brood her high lonely mysteries. (1906)

*Yeats is unquestionably the leading poet of the Celtic revival. He was born and brought up in Sligo, where he became saturated with the folklore traditions of Ireland. To find the work of men like Masefield and Yeats at the end of our survey of English and Celtic poetry is sufficient proof of the persistence of the initial trend of English and Celtic literature as evidenced in *Beowulf* and *Deirdre*.

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The Rose of the World. 5. **Usna's children**, the sons of Usnach. Cf. *Deirdre* (page 52).

*Reprinted from *The Poetical Works*, Vol. 1, 1906, by permission of The Macmillan Company.

He Remembers Forgotten Beauty. The answer to "Ubi Sunt Qui Ante Nos Fuerunt?" (page 344).

AMERICAN LYRIC POETRY

NINETEENTH CENTURY

Note

The development of American lyric poetry during the nineteenth century is comparatively simple to record. In colonial and frontier times little poetry of outstanding literary significance was produced, but in the middle of the nineteenth century a group of poets arose in New England and in the South who wrote poetry in harmony with the culture of the Victorian Age. Today it seems regrettable that these poets did not more often turn their attention directly to the poetic subject-matter inherent in their immediate or general environment, but they performed, nevertheless, a genuine service in creating literary traditions and establishing standards. We value their work as poetry, but it is not so distinctively American as that of the group which followed Whitman. Poe, however, was a great poet, and his poetry is worthy to rank with much of the best that was produced in England during the Romantic Movement. In fact, his genius was appreciated abroad long before he received adequate recognition at home. Poe was decried by the same group which rejected Whitman, but because of his life rather than his literary work, for his writing was based upon a keen understanding of contemporary European literature. His ability to express the unearthly is akin to that of Coleridge, and both poets have so far defied serious imitation.

The position of Whitman as a poet may not yet be finally determined, but as a literary influence he cannot be overestimated. Whitman was the first poet to turn from imitating contemporary English literary moods and to fix his gaze upon America. When he did so, he saw, not a number of social and geographic groups, each one striving to express its own way of life, but an underlying unity of national characteristics. The poetry of Whitman triumphs enduringly because it expresses the dominant emotions of the national life of America, and because it speaks in a language which the farmer and the miner understand as well as the business man and the scholar. In Whitman primal America spoke to his day so clearly that the cries of protest from those who appreciated only the Victorian traditions of literature were not long heeded, and in the twentieth century a considerable group of American poets are following his vision with significant results. We owe to him the new movement of American poetry.

American poetry of the nineteenth century, therefore, developed with a rather conscious imitation of Victorian poetry by both New England and Southern poets, until Whitman suddenly revealed the vision of the real America. The shock proved fatal to the supremacy of the Victorian tradition, and although the outcome and final worth of the new movement cannot yet be estimated, American poets of the twentieth century are now writing with keener insight and understanding because of the change.

*WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT
(1794–1878)

THANATOPSIS

To him who in the love of Nature holds
Communion with her visible forms, she speaks
A various language; for his gayer hours
She has a voice of gladness, and a smile
And eloquence of beauty, and she glides
Into his darker musings, with a mild 6
And healing sympathy that steals away
Their sharpness ere he is aware. When thoughts
Of the last bitter hour come like a blight
Over thy spirit, and sad images 10
Of the stern agony, and shroud, and pall,
And breathless darkness, and the narrow house,
Make thee to shudder and grow sick at heart—
Go forth, under the open sky, and list
To Nature's teachings, while from all around— 15
Earth and her waters, and the depths of air—
Comes a still voice—
Yet a few days, and thee

*A Massachusetts poet, who, after one year at Williams College and nine years as a lawyer, turned to writing as a profession. In 1829 he became editor of the *New York Evening Post*, which position he retained until his death. His poems are cast in the traditional forms, and the thoughts and style are dignified and reserved.

Thanatopsis. "The Consideration of Death." This is believed by many critics to be the first poem of considerable importance written in America. That Bryant was about eighteen when he wrote it accounts for the rather self-conscious high seriousness which it manifests, but does not detract from the felicity of its form and the genuine beauty of the poem as a whole. Notice that it lacks the lyric tone of "The Ways of Death Are Soothing and Serene" (page 599), and "What Is to Come We Know Not" (page 599).

The all-beholding sun shall see no more
In all his course; nor yet in the cold ground,
Where thy pale form was laid with many tears, 20
Nor in the embrace of ocean, shall exist
Thy image. Earth, that nourished thee, shall claim
Thy growth, to be resolved to earth again,
And, lost each human trace, surrendering up
Thine individual being, shalt thou go 25
To mix forever with the elements,
To be a brother to the insensible rock
And to the sluggish clod, which the rude swain
Turns with his share and treads upon. The oak
Shall send his roots abroad, and pierce thy mold. 30

Yet not to thine eternal resting-place
Shalt thou retire alone; nor couldst thou wish
Couch more magnificent. Thou shalt lie down
With patriarchs of the infant world—with kings,
The powerful of the earth—the wise, the good, 35
Fair forms, and hoary seers of ages past,
All in one mighty sepulcher. The hills
Rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun; the vales
Stretching in pensive quietness between;
The venerable woods; rivers that move 40
In majesty, and the complaining brooks
That make the meadows green; and, poured round all,
Old Ocean's gray and melancholy waste—
Are but the solemn decorations all
Of the great tomb of man. The golden sun, 45
The planets, all the infinite host of heaven,
Are shining on the sad abodes of death
Through the still lapse of ages. All that tread
The globe are but a handful to the tribes
That slumber in its bosom. Take the wings 50
Of morning, pierce the Barcan wilderness,
Or lose thyself in the continuous woods
Where rolls the Oregon, and hears no sound
Save his own dashings—yet the dead are there; 54
And millions in those solitudes, since first
The flight of years began, have laid them down
In their last sleep—the dead reign there alone.
So shalt thou rest, and what if thou withdraw
In silence from the living, and no friend
Take note of thy departure? All that breathe 60
Will share thy destiny. The gay will laugh
When thou art gone, the solemn brood of care
Plod on, and each one as before will chase
His favorite phantom; yet all these shall leave
Their mirth and their employments, and shall come 65
And make their bed with thee. As the long train
Of ages glides away, the sons of men,
The youth in life's green spring, and he who goes
In the full strength of years, matron and maid,
The speechless babe, and the gray-headed man— 70
Shall one by one be gathered to thy side,
By those who in their turn shall follow them.

So live, that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan, which moves
To that mysterious realm, where each shall take 75
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave,
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch 80
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams. 1811? (1817)

29. **share**, plowshare. 51. **Barcan**, north-African.

TO A WATERFOWL

Whither, midst falling dew,
While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,
Far through their rosy depths dost thou pursue
Thy solitary way?

Vainly the fowler's eye 5
Might mark thy distant flight to do thee wrong,
As, darkly seen against the crimson sky,
Thy figure floats along.

Seek'st thou the plashy brink
Of weedy lake, or marge of river wide, 10
Or where the rocking billows rise and sink
On the chafed ocean-side?

There is a Power whose care
Teaches thy way along that pathless coast—
The desert and illimitable air— 15
Lone wandering, but not lost.

All day thy wings have fanned,
At that far height, the cold, thin atmosphere;
Yet stoop not, weary, to the welcome land,
Though the dark night is near. 20

And soon that toil shall end;
Soon shalt thou find a summer home, and rest,
And scream among thy fellows; reeds shall bend
Soon o'er thy sheltered nest.

Thou'rt gone; the abyss of heaven 25
Hath swallowed up thy form; yet on my heart
Deeply hath sunk the lesson thou hast given,
And shall not soon depart.

He who from zone to zone
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight, 30
In the long way that I must tread alone
Will lead my steps aright. (1818)

To a Waterfowl. A felicitous poem, deserving comparison with the nineteenth-century English skylark poems (pages 462, 488) and "Margaritae Sorori" (page 600). In American poetry compare the motive with that of "All's Well" (page 703).

THE DEATH OF THE FLOWERS

The melancholy days are come, the saddest of the year,
Of wailing winds, and naked woods, and meadows brown and sear.
Heaped in the hollows of the grove the withered leaves lie dead;
They rustle to the eddying gust and to the rabbit's tread.
The robin and the wren are flown, and from the shrubs the jay, 5
And from the wood-top calls the crow through all the gloomy day.

Where are the flowers, the fair young flowers, that lately sprang and stood
In brighter light and softer airs, a beauteous sisterhood?
Alas! they all are in their graves; the gentle race of flowers
Are lying in their lowly beds with the fair and good of ours. 10
The rain is falling where they lie, but the cold November rain
Calls not, from out the gloomy earth, the lovely ones again.

The windflower and the violet, they perished long ago;
And the brier rose and the orchis died amid the summer glow;
But on the hill the goldenrod, and the aster in the wood, 15
And the yellow sunflower by the brook in autumn beauty stood
Till fell the frost from the clear, cold heaven, as falls the plague on men,
And the brightness of their smile was gone from upland, glade, and glen.

And now, when comes the calm, mild day, as still such days will come,

The Death of the Flowers. The restraint of this poem should be contrasted with the vivid emotionalism of "To Autumn" (page 512) and "Ode to the West Wind" (page 489). 14. **orchis**, orchid.

To call the squirrel and the bee from out
their winter home, 20
When the sound of dropping nuts is
heard, though all the trees are still,
And twinkle in the smoky light the
waters of the rill,
The south wind searches for the flowers
whose fragrance late he bore,
And sighs to find them in the wood and
by the stream no more.

And then I think of one who in her
youthful beauty died, 25
The fair meek blossom that grew up
and faded by my side:
In the cold moist earth we laid her,
when the forest cast the leaf,
And we wept that one so lovely should
have a life so brief:
Yet not unmeet it was that one, like that
young friend of ours,
So gentle and so beautiful, should perish
with the flowers. (1832)

TO THE FRINGED GENTIAN

Thou blossom, bright with autumn dew,
And colored with the heaven's own blue,
That openest when the quiet light
Succeeds the keen and frosty night,

Thou comest not when violets lean 5
O'er wandering brooks and springs un-
seen,
Or columbines, in purple dressed,
Nod o'er the ground bird's hidden nest.

Thou waitest late, and com'st alone,
When woods are bare and birds are
flown, 10
And frosts and shortening days portend
The aged year is near his end.

Then doth thy sweet and quiet eye
Look through its fringes to the sky,
Blue—blue—as if that sky let fall 15
A flower from its cerulean wall.

I would that thus, when I shall see
The hour of death draw near to me,
Hope, blossoming within my heart,
May look to heaven as I depart. (1832)

To the Fringed Gentian. Cf. "I Wandered Lonely As a Cloud" (page 462).

THE DEATH OF LINCOLN

Oh, slow to smite and swift to spare,
Gentle and merciful and just!
Who, in the fear of God, didst bear
The sword of power, a nation's trust!

In sorrow by thy bier we stand, 5
Amid the awe that hushes all,
And speak the anguish of a land
That shook with horror at thy fall.

Thy task is done—the bond are free;
We bear thee to an honored grave, 10
Whose proudest monument shall be
The broken fetters of the slave.

Pure was thy life; its bloody close
Hath placed thee with the sons of
light,
Among the noble host of those 15
Who perished in the cause of Right.
(1866)

*HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW (1807-1882)

THE DAY IS DONE

The day is done, and the darkness
Falls from the wings of Night,
As a feather is wafted downward
From an eagle in his flight.

I see the lights of the village 5
Gleam through the rain and the mist,
And a feeling of sadness comes o'er me
That my soul cannot resist;

A feeling of sadness and longing
That is not akin to pain, 10
And resembles sorrow only
As the mist resembles the rain.

*Longfellow was born in Portland, Maine, of Pilgrim ancestry, and lived his life in the New England tradition, broadened, however, by foreign travel. Immediately after graduating from Bowdoin, he went abroad, and on his return became a professor of English there. When called to teach at Harvard he made another and extended trip abroad before taking up his new work. For the rest of his life he combined teaching and writing. Longfellow's literary and social contacts were wide and his work comprised both American and continental subjects. Longfellow rightly held the leading position among the group of New England poets in the nineteenth century, for his work is always finished, always genuine, and frequently inspired by deep emotion.

The Day Is Done. Cf. "In the Highlands" (page 598).

Come, read to me some poem,
  Some simple and heartfelt lay,
That shall soothe this restless feeling 15
  And banish the thoughts of day.

Not from the grand old masters,
  Not from the bards sublime,
Whose distant footsteps echo
  Through the corridors of Time. 20

For, like strains of martial music,
  Their mighty thoughts suggest
Life's endless toil and endeavor—
  And tonight I long for rest.

Read from some humbler poet, 25
  Whose songs gushed from his heart,
As showers from the clouds of summer,
  Or tears from the eyelids start;

Who, through long days of labor
  And nights devoid of ease, 30
Still heard in his soul the music
  Of wonderful melodies.

Such songs have power to quiet
  The restless pulse of care,
And come like the benediction 35
  That follows after prayer.

Then read from the treasured volume
  The poem of thy choice,
And lend to the rime of the poet
  The beauty of thy voice. 40

And the night shall be filled with music,
  And the cares that infest the day
Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,
  And as silently steal away.

(1844)

THE ARROW AND THE SONG

I shot an arrow into the air;
It fell to earth, I knew not where,
For, so swiftly it flew, the sight
Could not follow it in its flight.

I breathed a song into the air; 5
It fell to earth, I knew not where,
For who has sight so keen and strong
That it can follow the flight of song?

Long, long afterwards, in an oak
I found the arrow, still unbroke; 10
And the song, from beginning to end,
I found again in the heart of a friend.

(1845)

THE BRIDGE

I stood on the bridge at midnight
  As the clocks were striking the hour,
And the moon rose o'er the city,
  Behind the dark church-tower.

I saw her bright reflection 5
  In the waters under me,
Like a golden goblet falling
  And sinking into the sea.

And far in the hazy distance
  Of that lovely night in June, 10
The blaze of the flaming furnace
  Gleamed redder than the moon.

Among the long, black rafters
  The wavering shadows lay,
And the current that came from the ocean 15
  Seemed to lift and bear them away;

As, sweeping and eddying through them,
  Rose the belated tide,
And, streaming into the moonlight,
  The seaweed floated wide. 20

And like those waters rushing
  Among the wooden piers,
A flood of thoughts came o'er me
  That filled my eyes with tears.

How often, oh, how often, 25
  In the days that had gone by,
I had stood on that bridge at midnight
  And gazed on that wave and sky!

How often, oh, how often,
  I had wished that the ebbing tide 30
Would bear me away on its bosom
  O'er the ocean wild and wide!

For my heart was hot and restless,
  And my life was full of care,

The Bridge. The bridge referred to is over the Charles River between Boston and Cambridge. Cf. "Composed upon Westminster Bridge" (page 468) and "The Bridge of Sighs" (page 477).

And the burden laid upon me 35
  Seemed greater than I could bear.

But now it has fallen from me,
  It is buried in the sea;
And only the sorrow of others
  Throws its shadow over me. 40

Yet whenever I cross the river
  On its bridge with wooden piers
Like the odor of brine from the ocean
  Comes the thought of other years.

And I think how many thousands 45
  Of care-encumbered men,
Each bearing his burden of sorrow,
  Have crossed the bridge since then.

I see the long procession
  Still passing to and fro, 50
The young heart hot and restless,
  And the old subdued and slow!

And forever and forever,
  As long as the river flows,
As long as the heart has passions, 55
  As long as life has woes—

The moon and its broken reflection
  And its shadows shall appear,
As the symbol of love in heaven,
  And its wavering image here.

(1845)

THE SHIP OF STATE

From THE BUILDING OF THE SHIP

Thou, too, sail on, O Ship of State!
Sail on, O Union, strong and great!
Humanity with all its fears,
With all the hopes of future years,
Is hanging breathless on thy fate! 5
We know what Master laid thy keel,
What Workman wrought thy ribs of steel,
Who made each mast, and sail, and rope,
What anvils rang, what hammers beat,
In what a forge and what a heat 10
Were shaped the anchors of thy hope!
Fear not each sudden sound and shock,
'Tis of the wave and not the rock,
'Tis but the flapping of the sail,
And not a rent made by the gale! 15
In spite of rock and tempest's roar,
In spite of false lights on the shore,
Sail on, nor fear to breast the sea!
Our hearts, our hopes, are all with thee,
Our hearts, our hopes, our prayers, our tears, 20
Our faith triumphant o'er our fears,
Are all with thee—are all with thee!

(1849)

The Ship of State. Cf. "Fredome" (page 348) and "Patriotism" (page 472). The idea of the Ship of State is from Horace.

MY LOST YOUTH

Often I think of the beautiful town
  That is seated by the sea;
Often in thought go up and down
The pleasant streets of that dear old town,
  And my youth comes back to me. 5
    And a verse of a Lapland song
    Is haunting my memory still:
    "A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I can see the shadowy lines of its trees, 10
  And catch, in sudden gleams,
The sheen of the far-surrounding seas,
And islands that were the Hesperides
  Of all my boyish dreams.
    And the burden of that old song, 15
    It murmurs and whispers still:
    "A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the black wharves and the slips,
  And the sea-tides tossing free; 20
And the Spanish sailors with bearded lips,
And the beauty and mystery of the ships,
  And the magic of the sea.
    And the voice of that wayward song
    Is singing and saying still: 25

My Lost Youth. Cf. "I Remember, I Remember" (page 476), "Sing Me a Song of a Lad That Is Gone" (page 598), "The Barefoot Boy" (page 644), and "Birches" (page 689). 1. **town**, Portland, Me. 13. **Hesperides**, the gardens of the Greek giant, Atlas, in which grew golden apples.

"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the bulwarks by the shore,
And the fort upon the hill;
The sunrise gun, with its hollow roar, 30
The drumbeat repeated o'er and o'er,
And the bugle wild and shrill.
And the music of that old song
Throbs in my memory still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will, 35
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the sea-fight far away,
How it thundered o'er the tide!
And the dead captains, as they lay
In their graves, o'erlooking the tranquil bay 40
Where they in battle died.
And the sound of that mournful song
Goes through me with a thrill:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts." 45

I can see the breezy dome of groves,
The shadows of Deering's Woods;
And the friendships old and the early loves
Come back with a Sabbath sound, as of doves
In quiet neighborhoods. 50
And the verse of that sweet old song,
It flutters and murmurs still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the gleams and glooms that dart 55
Across the schoolboy's brain;
The song and the silence in the heart,
That in part are prophecies, and in part
Are longings wild and vain.
And the voice of that fitful song 60
Sings on, and is never still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

There are things of which I may not speak;
There are dreams that cannot die; 65
There are thoughts that make the strong heart weak,
And bring a pallor into the cheek,
And a mist before the eye.
And the words of that fatal song
Come over me like a chill: 70
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

Strange to me now are the forms I meet
When I visit the dear old town;
But the native air is pure and sweet, 75
And the trees that o'ershadow each well-known street,
As they balance up and down,
Are singing the beautiful song,
Are sighing and whispering still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will, 80
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

And Deering's Woods are fresh and fair,
And with joy that is almost pain
My heart goes back to wander there,
And among the dreams of the days that were 85
I find my lost youth again.
And the strange and beautiful song,
The groves are repeating it still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

(1858)

37. **sea-fight.** In 1813 the American brig *Surprise* captured the British brig *Boxer*, off Portland, Me.

DIVINA COMMEDIA

I

Oft have I seen at some cathedral door
A laborer, pausing in the dust and heat,
Lay down his burden, and with reverent feet
Enter, and cross himself, and on the floor

Divina Commedia. In 1861 Mrs. Longfellow was burned to death, while sealing a letter with wax. The shock interrupted Longfellow's course of life and his literary work. From 1861 to 1869 he devoted himself almost exclusively to a translation of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, for which from time to time he wrote these introductory sonnets. By many they are considered Longfellow's greatest poems.

Kneel to repeat his paternoster o'er; 5
Far off the noises of the world retreat;
The loud vociferations of the street
Become an undistinguishable roar.
So, as I enter here from day to day,
And leave my burden at this minster gate, 10
Kneeling in prayer, and not ashamed to pray,
The tumult of the time disconsolate
To inarticulate murmurs dies away,
While the eternal ages watch and wait.
(1864)

II

How strange the sculptures that adorn these towers!
This crowd of statues, in whose folded sleeves
Birds build their nests; while canopied with leaves
Parvis and portal bloom like trellised bowers,
And the vast minster seems a cross of flowers! 5
But fiends and dragons on the gargoyled eaves
Watch the dead Christ between the living thieves,
And, underneath, the traitor Judas lowers!
Ah! from what agonies of heart and brain,
What exultations trampling on despair,
What tenderness, what tears, what hate of wrong, 11
What passionate outcry of a soul in pain,
Uprose this poem of the earth and air,
This medieval miracle of song! (1866)

III

I enter, and I see thee in the gloom
Of the long aisles, O poet saturnine!
And strive to make my steps keep pace with thine.
The air is filled with some unknown perfume;
The congregation of the dead make room 5
For thee to pass; the votive tapers shine;
Like rooks that haunt Ravenna's groves of pine
The hovering echoes fly from tomb to tomb.
From the confessionals I hear arise
Rehearsals of forgotten tragedies, 10
And lamentations from the crypts below;
And then a voice celestial that begins
With the pathetic words, "Although your sins
As scarlet be," and ends with "as the snow."
(1866)

IV

With snow-white veil and garments as of flame,
She stands before thee, who so long ago
Filled thy young heart with passion and the woe
From which thy song and all its splendors came;
And while with stern rebuke she speaks thy name, 5
The ice about thy heart melts as the snow
On mountain heights, and in swift overflow
Comes gushing from thy lips in sobs of shame.
Thou makest full confession; and a gleam,
As of the dawn on some dark forest cast, 10
Seems on thy lifted forehead to increase;
Lethe and Eunoë—the remembered dream
And the forgotten sorrow—bring at last
That perfect pardon which is perfect peace. (1867)

V

I lift mine eyes, and all the windows blaze
With forms of Saints and holy men who died,

10. **minster**, church.
II. 4. **Parvis**, a court, colonnade, or porch in front of a church.
III. 2. **poet saturnine.** Dante is so-called because of his somber disposition. In astrology the planet Saturn supposedly has a somber influence.
7. **Ravenna**, a north-Italian city where Dante, an exile from Florence, spent his last years.
IV. 2. **She**, Beatrice Portinari, the beloved of Dante, in whose honor he wrote the *Divine Comedy*. 12. **Lethe and Eunoë.** In the vision of the *Divine Comedy* Dante at one time visits the garden of Eden and beholds there two rivers: Lethe, which causes forgetfulness of sin, and Eunoë, which evokes the memory of righteous deeds (*Purgatorio*, xxviii, 121-132).

Here martyred and hereafter glorified;
And the great Rose upon its leaves displays
Christ's Triumph, and the angelic roundelays, 5
With splendor upon splendor multiplied;
And Beatrice again at Dante's side
No more rebukes, but smiles her words of praise.
And then the organ sounds, and unseen choirs
Sing the old Latin hymns of peace and love 10
And benedictions of the Holy Ghost;
And the melodious bells among the spires
O'er all the housetops and through heaven above
Proclaim the elevation of the Host!
(1866)

VI

O star of morning and of liberty!
O bringer of the light, whose splendor shines
Above the darkness of the Apennines,
Forerunner of the day that is to be!
The voices of the city and the sea, 5
The voices of the mountains and the pines,
Repeat thy song, till the familiar lines
Are footpaths for the thought of Italy!
Thy flame is blown abroad from all the heights,
Through all the nations, and a sound is heard, 10
As of a mighty wind, and men devout,
Strangers of Rome, and the new proselytes,
In their own language hear the wondrous word,
And many are amazed and many doubt.
(1866)

V. 4. **great Rose.** At the end of his vision Dante beholds in paradise the saints gathered about Christ in the form of a white rose (*Paradiso*, xxx-xxxiii). Gothic cathedrals usually have a symbolic rose window in the façade. 14. **elevation of the Host**, that moment in the Mass when the wafer is consecrated, and is believed to become the actual flesh and blood of Christ.

*OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES
(1809-1894)

OLD IRONSIDES

Aye, tear her tattered ensign down!
Long has it waved on high,
And many an eye has danced to see
That banner in the sky.
Beneath it rung the battle shout, 5
And burst the cannon's roar;
The meteor of the ocean air
Shall sweep the clouds no more.

Her deck, once red with heroes' blood,
Where knelt the vanquished foe, 10
When winds were hurrying o'er the flood,
And waves were white below,
No more shall feel the victor's tread,
Or know the conquered knee;
The harpies of the shore shall pluck 15
The eagle of the sea!

O better that her shattered hulk
Should sink beneath the wave;
Her thunders shook the mighty deep,
And there should be her grave; 20
Nail to the mast her holy flag,
Set every threadbare sail,
And give her to the god of storms,
The lightning and the gale!
(1830)

THE CHAMBERED NAUTILUS

This is the ship of pearl, which, poets feign,
Sails the unshadowed main—
The venturous bark that flings
On the sweet summer wind its purpled wings

*Holmes, who was born in Cambridge, came of distinguished New England ancestry. After graduating from Harvard in 1829, he studied medicine abroad (1833-1835), and took up the practice of medicine in Boston after a year of teaching at Dartmouth. From 1847 to 1882 he was professor of anatomy and physiology in the Harvard Medical School, a practicing physician, and an active writer. Steadily his reputation as a poet, essayist, and novelist rose, until he became one of the chief literary members of the New England group. His virility, humor, and deep feeling are always clearly expressed.

Old Ironsides. Written as a protest against the proposal of the Navy Department to scrap the frigate *Constitution*, famous for its exploits during the War of 1812.

In gulfs enchanted, where the Siren sings, 5
And coral reefs lie bare,
Where the cold sea-maids rise to sun their streaming hair.

Its webs of living gauze no more unfurl;
Wrecked is the ship of pearl!
And every chambered cell, 10
Where its dim dreaming life was wont to dwell,
As the frail tenant shaped his growing shell,
Before thee lies revealed—
Its irised ceiling rent, its sunless crypt unsealed!

Year after year beheld the silent toil 15
That spread his lustrous coil;
Still, as the spiral grew,
He left the past year's dwelling for the new,
Stole with soft step its shining archway through,
Built up its idle door, 20
Stretched in his last-found home, and knew the old no more.

Thanks for the heavenly message brought by thee,
Child of the wandering sea,
Cast from her lap, forlorn!
From thy dead lips a clearer note is born 25
Than ever Triton blew from wreathéd horn!
While on mine ear it rings,
Through the deep caves of thought I hear a voice that sings:

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll! 30
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea! (1858)

26. **Triton,** the son of Poseidon, the Greek god of the sea. Cf. "The World Is Too Much with Us" (page 469).

HYMN OF TRUST

O Love Divine, that stooped to share
Our sharpest pang, our bitterest tear,
On thee we cast each earthborn care,
We smile at pain while thou art near!

Though long the weary way we tread, 5
And sorrow crown each lingering year,
No path we shun, no darkness dread,
Our hearts still whispering, "Thou art near!"

When drooping pleasure turns to grief,
And trembling faith is changed to fear, 10
The murmuring wind, the quivering leaf,
Shall softly tell us, "Thou art near!"

On thee we fling our burdening woe,
O Love Divine, forever dear,
Content to suffer while we know, 15
Living and dying, thou art near!
(1859)

A SUN-DAY HYMN

Lord of all being! throned afar,
Thy glory flames from sun and star;
Center and soul of every sphere,
Yet to each loving heart how near!

Sun of our life, thy quickening ray 5
Sheds on our path the glow of day;
Star of our hope, thy softened light
Cheers the long watches of the night.

Our midnight is thy smile withdrawn;
Our noontide is thy gracious dawn; 10
Our rainbow arch thy mercy's sign;
All, save the clouds of sin, are thine!

Lord of all life, below, above,
Whose light is truth, whose warmth is love,
Before thy ever-blazing throne 15
We ask no luster of our own.

Grant us thy truth to make us free,
And kindling hearts that burn for thee,
Till all thy living altars claim
One holy light, one heavenly flame!
(1859)

Hymn of Trust. Cf. this hymn and the next with the hymns of Addison (page 412) and Wesley (page 431).

*JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER
(1807-1892)

THE BAREFOOT BOY

Blessings on thee, little man,
Barefoot boy, with cheek of tan!
With thy turned-up pantaloons,
And thy merry whistled tunes;
With thy red lip, redder still 5
Kissed by strawberries on the hill;
With the sunshine on thy face,
Through thy torn brim's jaunty grace;
From my heart I give thee joy—
I was once a barefoot boy! 10
Prince thou art—the grown-up man
Only is republican.
Let the million-dollared ride!
Barefoot, trudging at his side,
Thou hast more than he can buy 15
In the reach of ear and eye—
Outward sunshine, inward joy:
Blessings on thee, barefoot boy!
O for boyhood's painless play,
Sleep that wakes in laughing day, 20
Health that mocks the doctor's rules,
Knowledge never learned of schools,
Of the wild bee's morning chase,
Of the wild-flower's time and place,
Flight of fowl and habitude 25
Of the tenants of the wood;
How the tortoise bears his shell,
How the woodchuck digs his cell,
And the ground-mole sinks his well;
How the robin feeds her young, 30
How the oriole's nest is hung;
Where the whitest lilies blow,
Where the freshest berries grow,
Where the ground-nut trails its vine,
Where the wood-grape's clusters shine;
Of the black wasp's cunning way, 36
Mason of his walls of clay,
And the architectural plans
Of gray hornet artisans!
For, eschewing books and tasks, 40
Nature answers all he asks;
Hand in hand with her he walks,
Face to face with her he talks,
Part and parcel of her joy—
Blessings on the barefoot boy! 45

*Whittier was a country boy from Haverhill, Mass. His education came chiefly from the farm, and his most widely remembered verses deal with New England farm life. His narrative poem *Snow-Bound* deserves comparison with "The Cotter's Saturday Night" (page 439).

O for boyhood's time of June,
Crowding years in one brief moon,
When all things I heard or saw,
Me, their master, waited for.
I was rich in flowers and trees, 50
Humming-birds and honey-bees;
For my sport the squirrel played,
Plied the snouted mole his spade;
For my taste the blackberry cone
Purpled over hedge and stone; 55
Laughed the brook for my delight
Through the day and through the night,
Whispering at the garden wall,
Talked with me from fall to fall;
Mine the sand-rimmed pickerel pond, 60
Mine the walnut slopes beyond,
Mine, on bending orchard trees,
Apples of Hesperides!
Still as my horizon grew,
Larger grew my riches, too; 65
All the world I saw or knew
Seemed a complex Chinese toy,
Fashioned for a barefoot boy!

O for festal dainties spread,
Like my bowl of milk and bread; 70
Pewter spoon and bowl of wood,
On the door-stone, gray and rude!
O'er me, like a regal tent,
Cloudy-ribbed, the sunset bent,
Purple-curtained, fringed with gold, 75
Looped in many a wind-swung fold;
While for music came the play
Of the pied frogs' orchestra;
And, to light the noisy choir,
Lit the fly his lamp of fire. 80
I was monarch; pomp and joy
Waited on the barefoot boy!

Cheerily, then, my little man,
Live and laugh, as boyhood can!
Though the flinty slopes be hard, 85
Stubble-speared the new-mown sward,
Every morn shall lead thee through
Fresh baptisms of the dew;
Every evening from thy feet
Shall the cool wind kiss the heat. 90
All too soon these feet must hide
In the prison cells of pride,
Lose the freedom of the sod,
Like a colt's for work be shod,
Made to tread the mills of toil, 95

78. pied, party-colored.

Up and down in ceaseless moil.
Happy if their track be found
Never on forbidden ground;
Happy if they sink not in
Quick and treacherous sands of sin. 100
Ah! that thou couldst know thy joy,
Ere it passes, barefoot boy! (1855)

OUR MASTER

Immortal Love, forever full,
Forever flowing free,
Forever shared, forever whole,
A never-ebbing sea!

Our outward lips confess the name 5
All other names above;
Love only knoweth whence it came
And comprehendeth love.

Blow, winds of God, awake, and blow
The mists of earth away! 10
Shine out, O Light Divine, and show
How wide and far we stray!

Hush every lip, close every book,
The strife of tongues forbear;
Why forward reach, or backward look, 15
For love that clasps like air?

We may not climb the heavenly steeps
To bring the Lord Christ down;
In vain we search the lowest deeps,
For him no depths can drown. 20

Nor holy bread, nor blood of grape,
The lineaments restore
Of him we know in outward shape
And in the flesh no more.

He cometh not a king to reign; 25
The world's long hope is dim;
The weary centuries watch in vain
The clouds of heaven for him.

Death comes, life goes; the asking eye
And ear are answerless; 30
The grave is dumb, the hollow sky
Is sad with silentness.

The letter fails, and systems fall,
And every symbol wanes;
The Spirit over-brooding all 35
Eternal Love remains.

And not for signs in heaven above
Or earth below they look,
Who know with John his smile of love,
With Peter his rebuke. 40

In joy of inward peace, or sense
Of sorrow over sin,
He is his own best evidence,
His witness is within.

No fable old, nor mythic lore, 45
Nor dream of bards and seers,
No dead fact stranded on the shore
Of the oblivious years—

But warm, sweet, tender, even yet
A present help is he; 50
And faith has still its Olivet
And love its Galilee.

The healing of his seamless dress
Is by our beds of pain;
We touch him in life's throng and press,
And we are whole again. 56

Through him the first fond prayers are said
Our lips of childhood frame,
The last low whispers of our dead
Are burdened with his name. 60

Our Lord and Master of us all!
Whate'er our name or sign,
We own thy sway, we hear thy call,
We test our lives by thine.

Thou judgest us; thy purity 65
Doth all our lusts condemn;
The love that draws us nearer thee
Is hot with wrath to them.

Our thoughts lie open to thy sight;
And, naked to thy glance, 70
Our secret sins are in the light
Of thy pure countenance.

Our Master. As many as five hymns have been excerpted from this poem. The faith here expressed parallels that of the more confident parts of "In Memoriam" (pages 533 ff).

51. **Olivet**, the Mount of Olives, near Jerusalem. Christ prayed there before his crucifixion.

Thy healing pains, a keen distress,
  Thy tender light shines in;
Thy sweetness is the bitterness, 75
  Thy grace the pang of sin.

Yet, weak and blinded though we be,
  Thou dost our service own;
We bring our varying gifts to thee,
  And thou rejectest none. 80

To thee our full humanity,
  Its joys and pains, belong;
The wrong of man to man on thee
  Inflicts a deeper wrong.

Who hates, hates thee; who loves becomes 85
  Therein to thee allied;
All sweet accords of hearts and homes
  In thee are multiplied.

Deep strike thy roots, O heavenly Vine,
  Within our earthly sod, 90
Most human and yet most divine,
  The flower of man and God!

O Love! O Life! Our faith and sight
  Thy presence maketh one,
As through transfigured clouds of white
  We trace the noon-day sun. 96

So, to our mortal eyes subdued,
  Flesh-veiled, but not concealed,
We know in thee the fatherhood
  And heart of God revealed. 100

We faintly hear, we dimly see,
  In differing phrase we pray;
But, dim or clear, we own in thee
  The Light, the Truth, the Way!

The homage that we render thee 105
  Is still our Father's own;
No jealous claim or rivalry
  Divides the Cross and Throne.

To do thy will is more than praise,
  As words are less than deeds, 110
And simple trust can find thy ways
  We miss with chart of creeds.

No pride of self thy service hath,
  No place for me and mine;
Our human strength is weakness, death
  Our life, apart from thine. 116

Apart from thee all gain is loss,
  All labor vainly done;
The solemn shadow of thy Cross
  Is better than the sun. 120

Alone, O Love ineffable!
  Thy saving name is given;
To turn aside from thee is hell,
  To walk with thee is heaven!

How vain, secure in all thou art, 125
  Our noisy championship!
The sighing of the contrite heart
  Is more than flattering lip.

Not thine the bigot's partial plea,
  Nor thine the zealot's ban; 130
Thou well canst spare a love of thee
  Which ends in hate of man.

Our Friend, our Brother, and our Lord,
  What may thy service be?—
Nor name, nor form, nor ritual word,
  But simply following thee. 136

We bring no ghastly holocaust,
  We pile no graven stone;
He serves thee best who loveth most
  His brothers and thy own. 140

Thy litanies, sweet offices
  Of love and gratitude;
Thy sacramental liturgies,
  The joy of doing good.

In vain shall waves of incense drift 145
  The vaulted nave around;
In vain the minster turret lift
  Its brazen weights of sound.

The heart must ring thy Christmas bells,
  Thy inward altars raise; 150
Its faith and hope thy canticles,
  And its obedience praise! (1866)

IN SCHOOL-DAYS

Still sits the schoolhouse by the road,
  A ragged beggar sleeping;
Around it still the sumachs grow,
  And blackberry-vines are creeping.

In School-Days. Cf. the "Lucy Gray" poems (pages 237, 456). Contrast the use of detail in this poem with that in "My Sister's Sleep" (page 586).

Within, the master's desk is seen, 5
  Deep scarred by raps official;
The warping floor, the battered seats,
  The jackknife's carved initial;

The charcoal frescoes on its wall;
  Its door's worn sill, betraying 10
The feet that, creeping slow to school,
  Went storming out to playing!

Long years ago a winter sun
  Shone over it at setting;
Lit up its western window-panes, 15
  And low eaves' icy fretting.

It touched the tangled golden curls,
  And brown eyes full of grieving,
Of one who still her steps delayed
  When all the school were leaving. 20

For near her stood the little boy
  Her childish favor singled;
His cap pulled low upon a face
  Where pride and shame were mingled.

Pushing with restless feet the snow 25
  To right and left, he lingered—
As restlessly her tiny hands
  The blue-checked apron fingered.

He saw her lift her eyes; he felt
  The soft hand's light caressing, 30
And heard the tremble of her voice,
  As if a fault confessing.

"I'm sorry that I spelt the word;
  I hate to go above you,
Because"—the brown eyes lower fell—
  "Because, you see, I love you!" 36

Still memory to a gray-haired man
  That sweet child-face is showing.
Dear girl! the grasses on her grave
  Have forty years been growing! 40

He lives to learn in life's hard school,
  How few who pass above him
Lament their triumph and his loss,
  Like her—because they love him.

(1870)

*JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL
(1819-1891)

THE SHEPHERD OF KING ADMETUS

There came a youth upon the earth,
  Some thousand years ago,
Whose slender hands were nothing worth,
Whether to plow, or reap, or sow.

Upon an empty tortoise-shell 5
  He stretched some chords, and drew
Music that made men's bosoms swell
Fearless, or brimmed their eyes with dew.

Then King Admetus, one who had
  Pure taste by right divine, 10
Decreed his singing not too bad
To hear between the cups of wine.

And so, well pleased with being soothed
  Into a sweet half-sleep,
Three times his kingly beard he smoothed,
And made him viceroy o'er his sheep. 16

His words were simple words enough,
  And yet he used them so
That what in other mouths was rough
In his seemed musical and low. 20

Men called him but a shiftless youth,
  In whom no good they saw;
And yet, unwittingly, in truth,
They made his careless words their law.

They knew not how he learned at all,
  For idly, hour by hour, 26
He sat and watched the dead leaves fall,
Or mused upon a common flower.

*Another Cambridge professor and poet. He graduated from Harvard in 1838, studied law, but never practiced it, and became an editor and writer. His brilliant productions between 1844 and 1855 led to his appointment as Professor of French and Spanish at Harvard, where he taught until 1877, serving thereafter as Minister of the United States, first to Spain and later to England. Like Longfellow, Lowell was a widely read and widely cultivated man, who grasped the significance of both American and European life. *The Biglow Papers* and "The Vision of Sir Launfal" are among his best-known works.

The Shepherd of King Admetus. Based upon the Greek myth that Apollo was once banished from Olympus for a year to serve as shepherd to King Admetus, the husband of Alcestis. Apollo was the patron of music and poetry, and was fabled to have invented the lyre.

It seemed the loveliness of things
  Did teach him all their use,
For, in mere weeds, and stones, and springs,
He found a healing power profuse.

Men granted that his speech was wise,
  But, when a glance they caught
Of his slim grace and woman's eyes, 35
They laughed, and called him good-for-naught.

Yet after he was dead and gone,
  And e'en his memory dim,
Earth seemed more sweet to live upon,
More full of love, because of him. 40

And day by day more holy grew
  Each spot where he had trod,
Till after-poets only knew
Their firstborn brother as a god.

(1842)

*EDGAR ALLAN POE (1809-1849)

TO HELEN

Helen, thy beauty is to me
  Like those Nicéan barks of yore,
That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,
  The weary, way-worn wanderer bore
  To his own native shore. 5

On desperate seas long wont to roam,
  Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
Thy Naiad airs have brought me home
  To the glory that was Greece
  And the grandeur that was Rome. 10

Lo! in yon brilliant window-niche
  How statue-like I see thee stand,
The agate lamp within thy hand!
  Ah, Psyche, from the regions which
  Are Holy-Land! (1831)

THE CONQUEROR WORM

Lo! 'tis a gala night
  Within the lonesome latter years!
An angel throng, bewinged, bedight
  In veils, and drowned in tears,
Sit in a theater, to see 5
  A play of hopes and fears,
While the orchestra breathes fitfully
  The music of the spheres.

Mimes, in the form of God on high,
  Mutter and mumble low, 10
And hither and thither fly—
  Mere puppets they, who come and go
At bidding of vast formless things
  That shift the scenery to and fro,
Flapping from out their Condor wings 15
  Invisible Woe!

That motley drama—oh, be sure
  It shall not be forgot!
With its Phantom chased for evermore,
  By a crowd that seize it not, 20
Through a circle that ever returneth in
  To the selfsame spot,
And much of madness, and more of sin,
  And horror the soul of the plot.

But see, amid the mimic rout, 25
  A crawling shape intrude!
A blood-red thing that writhes from out
  The scenic solitude!
It writhes!—it writhes!—with mortal pangs
  The mimes become its food, 30
And seraphs sob at vermin fangs
  In human gore imbued.

*Poe was a brilliant and eccentric genius, who, until recent times, received greater recognition in Europe than in America. His parents were strong-willed, romantic people; his father had been disinherited, and his mother was an actress. From the age of two, when his parents died, Poe was under the guardianship of Mr. Allan, a merchant in Richmond, who directed Poe's rather scattered education, which culminated in one year's stay at the University of Virginia and two years' stay at West Point, from which institution he was expelled in 1831. The rest of Poe's life was devoted to literature. He supported himself by editing various publications, but his haphazard methods and restless disposition never permitted him to stay long in one place. His marriage in 1836 was romantic and happy, but the death of his wife in 1847 was so great a shock to him that his health was shattered. Poe holds a high place in American literature. His genius, like that of Blake and Coleridge, dealt best with the unusual and the supernatural. In "The Philosophy of Composition" (page II-509) Poe explains his literary beliefs, and to them he strictly adhered. His opinions on poetry are expressed in certain essays, of which the best known is "The Poetic Principle."

To Helen. 2. **Nicéan**, referring to the lake city Nicala in Asia Minor, which was important during the Byzantine Empire and the Crusades. 8. **Naiad**, a nymph who was supposed to dwell in rivers, lakes, and springs.

14. **Psyche.** When Cupid wooed Psyche, he came by night and did not let her see him. Once she lit a lamp, but Cupid, awaking, fled.

The Conqueror Worm. Cf. "The Clod and the Pebble" (page 434) and "The Book of Thel" (page 435).

Out—out are the lights—out all!
And, over each quivering form,
The curtain, a funeral pall, 35
Comes down with the rush of a storm,
While the angels, all pallid and wan,
Uprising, unveiling, affirm
That the play is the tragedy, "Man,"
And its hero the Conqueror Worm.

(1843)

THE RAVEN

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore—
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
" 'Tis some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door— 5
Only this and nothing more."

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December;
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.
Eagerly I wished the morrow—vainly I had sought to borrow
From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the lost Lenore— 10
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore—
Nameless *here* for evermore.

And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain
Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating 15
" 'Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door—
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door—
This it is and nothing more."

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,
"Sir," said I, "or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore; 20
But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,
That I scarce was sure I heard you"—here I opened wide the door;
Darkness there and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing, 25
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before;
But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,
And the only word there spoken was the whispered word "Lenore!"
This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word "Lenore!"
Merely this and nothing more. 30

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,
Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder than before.
"Surely," said I, "surely that is something at my window lattice;
Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore—
Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore— 35
'Tis the wind and nothing more!"

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter
In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yore.
Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or stayed he;
But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door— 40
Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door—
Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,
"Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said, "art sure no craven,
Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the Nightly shore— 46

The Raven. See "The Philosophy of Composition" (page II-509). Cf. "The Blessed Damozel" (page 587).

41. **Pallas**, Athena, the Greek goddess of wisdom.

Tell me what thy lordly name is on the
Night's Plutonian shore!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

Much I marveled this ungainly fowl to
hear discourse so plainly,
Though its answer little meaning—little
relevancy bore; 50
For we cannot help agreeing that no
living human being
Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird
above his chamber door—
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust
above his chamber door,
With such name as "Nevermore."

But the Raven, sitting lonely on the
placid bust, spoke only 55
That one word, as if his soul in that one
word he did outpour.
Nothing further then he uttered—not a
feather then he fluttered—
Till I scarcely more than muttered,
"Other friends have flown before—
On the morrow *he* will leave me, as my
hopes have flown before."
Then the bird said, "Nevermore." 60

Startled at the stillness broken by reply
so aptly spoken,
"Doubtless," said I, "what it utters is
its only stock and store
Caught from some unhappy master
whom unmerciful disaster
Followed fast and followed faster till his
songs one burden bore—
Till the dirges of his hope that melan-
choly burden bore 65
Of 'Never—nevermore.' "

But the Raven still beguiling all my
fancy into smiling,
Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in
front of bird and bust and door;
Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook
myself to linking
Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this
ominous bird of yore— 70
What this grim, ungainly, ghastly,
gaunt, and ominous bird of yore
Meant in croaking "Nevermore."

47. **Plutonian.** Pluto was ruler of the Greek Hades.

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no
syllable expressing
To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned
into my bosom's core;
This and more I sat divining, with my
head at ease reclining 75
On the cushion's velvet lining that the
lamp-light gloated o'er,
But whose velvet-violet lining with the
lamp-light gloating o'er,
She shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then, methought, the air grew denser,
perfumed from an unseen censer
Swung by seraphim whose footfalls
tinkled on the tufted floor. 80
"Wretch," I cried, "thy God hath lent
thee—by these angels he hath sent
thee
Respite—respite and nepenthe from thy
memories of Lenore;
Quaff, O quaff this kind nepenthe and
forget this lost Lenore!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil!
prophet still, if bird or devil!— 85
Whether tempter sent, or whether tem-
pest tossed thee here ashore,
Desolate yet all undaunted, on this
desert land enchanted—
On this home by horror haunted—tell
me truly, I implore—
Is there—*is* there balm in Gilead?—tell
me—tell me, I implore!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore." 90

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil!—
prophet still, if bird or devil!
By that heaven that bends above us—
by that God we both adore—
Tell this soul with sorrow laden if,
within the distant Aidenn,
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the
angels name Lenore—
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom
the angels name Lenore." 95
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Be that word our sign of parting, bird
or fiend!" I shrieked, upstarting—

83. **nepenthe,** a drug or potion supposed by the ancients to banish sorrow or its memory. 89. **Gilead.** See Jeremiah, lvi, 11. 93. **Aidenn,** Arabic spelling of *Eden.*

"Get thee back into the tempest and the
Night's Plutonian shore!
Leave no black plume as a token of that
lie thy soul hath spoken!
Leave my loneliness unbroken!—quit
the bust above my door! 100
Take thy beak from out my heart, and
take thy form from off my door!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

And the Raven, never flitting, still is
sitting, *still* is sitting
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above
my chamber door;
And his eyes have all the seeming of a
demon's that is dreaming, 105
And the lamplight o'er him streaming
throws his shadow on the floor;
And my soul from out that shadow that
lies floating on the floor
Shall be lifted—nevermore! (1845)

ULALUME

The skies they were ashen and sober;
The leaves they were crispéd and sear—
The leaves they were withering and
sear;
It was night in the lonesome October
Of my most immemorial year; 5
It was hard by the dim lake of Auber,
In the misty mid region of Weir—
It was down by the dank tarn of Auber,
In the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

Here once, through an alley Titanic, 10
Of cypress, I roamed with my Soul—
Of cypress, with Psyche, my Soul.
These were days when my heart was
volcanic
As the scoriac rivers that roll—
As the lavas that restlessly roll 15
Their sulphurous currents down Yaanek
In the ultimate climes of the pole—
That groan as they roll down Mount
Yaanek
In the realms of the boreal pole.

Our talk had been serious and sober, 20
But our thoughts they were palsied
and sear—
Our memories were treacherous and
sear—
For we knew not the month was October
And we marked not the night of the
year
(Ah, night of all nights in the year!)—25
We noted not the dim lake of Auber—
(Though once we had journeyed down
here)—
Remembered not the dank tarn of Auber,
Nor the ghoul-haunted woodland of
Weir.

And now, as the night was senescent 30
And star-dials pointed to morn—
As the star-dials hinted of morn—
At the end of our path a liquescent
And nebulous luster was born,
Out of which a miraculous crescent 35
Arose with a duplicate horn—
Astarte's bediamonded crescent
Distinct with its duplicate horn.

And I said—"She is warmer than Dian;
She rolls through an ether of sighs—
She revels in a region of sighs; 41
She has seen that the tears are not dry on
These cheeks, where the worm never
dies,
And has come past the stars of the Lion
To point us the path to the skies— 45
To the Lethean peace of the skies—
Come up, in despite of the Lion,
To shine on us with her bright eyes—
Come up through the lair of the Lion,
With love in her luminous eyes." 50

But Psyche, uplifting her finger,
Said—"Sadly this star I mistrust—
Her pallor I strangely mistrust—
Oh, hasten!—oh, let us not linger!
Oh, fly!—let us fly!—for we must." 55
In terror she spoke, letting sink her
Wings till they trailed in the dust—
In agony sobbed, letting sink her
Plumes till they trailed in the dust—
Till they sorrowfully trailed in the
dust. 60

I replied—"This is nothing but dreaming;
Let us on by this tremulous light!

Ulalume. Written eleven months after the death of his wife. Cf. "The Book of Thel" (page 435). The places here named are fictitious. 12. **Psyche,** in classic mythology, a beautiful maiden, the personification of the soul. 14. **scoriac,** like dross or refuse from melted ore.

37. **Astarte,** the Phoenician goddess of the moon. 39. **Dian,** Diana, the Greek goddess of the moon. 44. **Lion,** the constellation Leo. 46. **Lethean,** causing forgetfulness, like the waters of the River Lethe in the Greek Hades.

Let us bathe in this crystalline light!
Its Sibyllic splendor is beaming
With hope and in beauty tonight:—
See!—it flickers up the sky through the night! 66
Ah, we safely may trust to its gleaming,
And be sure it will lead us aright—
We safely may trust to a gleaming
That cannot but guide us aright, 70
Since it flickers up to heaven through the night."

Thus I pacified Psyche and kissed her,
And tempted her out of her gloom—
And conquered her scruples and gloom;
And we passed to the end of the vista,
But were stopped by the door of a tomb— 76
By the door of a legended tomb;
And I said—"What is written, sweet sister,
On the door of this legended tomb?"
She replied—"Ulalume—Ulalume—
'Tis the vault of thy lost Ulalume!"

Then my heart it grew ashen and sober
As the leaves that were crispéd and sear—
As the leaves that were withering and sear,
And I cried—"It was surely October 85
On *this* very night of last year
That I journeyed—I journeyed down here—
That I brought a dread burden down here—
On this night of all nights in the year.
Ah, what demon has tempted me here? 90
Well I know, now, this dim lake of Auber,
This misty mid region of Weir;
Well I know, now, this dank tarn of Auber,
This ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir." (1847)

ANNABEL LEE

It was many and many a year ago,
In a kingdom by the sea
That a maiden there lived whom you may know
By the name of Annabel Lee;
And this maiden she lived with no other thought 5
Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and *she* was a child,
In this kingdom by the sea,
But we loved with a love that was more than love—
I and my Annabel Lee— 10
With a love that the wingéd seraphs of heaven
Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
In this kingdom by the sea,
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling 15
My beautiful Annabel Lee;
So that her highborn kinsmen came
And bore her away from me,
To shut her up in a sepulcher
In this kingdom by the sea. 20

The angels, not half so happy in heaven,
Went envying her and me—
Yes! that was the reason (as all men know,
In this kingdom by the sea)
That the wind came out of the cloud by night, 25
Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love
Of those who were older than we—
Of many far wiser than we—
And neither the angels in heaven above, 30
Nor the demons down under the sea,
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;

For the moon never beams, without bringing me dreams
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee; 35
And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
Of my darling—my darling—my life and my bride,
In the sepulcher there by the sea— 40
In her tomb by the sounding sea.
(1849)

64. **Sibyllic**, pertaining to a sibyl or Grecian prophetess. The sibyl at Delphi was famous in classical antiquity.

Annabel Lee. A poem in memory of his dead wife.

*RALPH WALDO EMERSON
(1803-1882)

CONCORD HYMN

SUNG AT THE COMPLETION OF THE BATTLE MONUMENT, JULY 4, 1837.

By the rude bridge that arched the flood,
  Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,
Here once the embattled farmers stood
  And fired the shot heard round the world.

The foe long since in silence slept; 5
  Alike the conqueror silent sleeps;
And Time the ruined bridge has swept
  Down the dark stream which seaward creeps.

On this green bank, by this soft stream,
  We set today a votive stone, 10
That memory may their deed redeem,
  When, like our sires, our sons are gone.

Spirit, that made those heroes dare
  To die, and leave their children free,
Bid Time and Nature gently spare 15
  The shaft we raise to them and thee.
(1837)

GIVE ALL TO LOVE

Give all to love;
Obey thy heart;
Friends, kindred, days,
Estate, good fame,
Plans, credit, and the Muse— 5
Nothing refuse.

'Tis a brave master;
Let it have scope;
Follow it utterly,
Hope beyond hope. 10
High and more high
It dives into noon,
With wing unspent,
Untold intent;
But it is a god, 15
Knows its own path
And the outlets of the sky.

It was never for the mean;
It requireth courage stout.
Souls above doubt, 20
Valor unbending,
It will reward—
They shall return
More than they were,
And ever ascending. 25

Leave all for love;
Yet, hear me, yet,
One word more thy heart behoved,
One pulse more of firm endeavor—
Keep thee today, 30
Tomorrow, forever,
Free as an Arab
Of thy beloved.

Cling with life to the maid;
But when the surprise, 35
First vague shadow of surmise
Flits across her bosom young,
Of a joy apart from thee,
Free be she, fancy-free;
Nor thou detain her vesture's hem, 40
Nor the palest rose she flung
From her summer diadem.

Though thou loved her as thyself,
As a self of purer clay,
Though her parting dims the day, 45
Stealing grace from all alive;
Heartily know,
When half-gods go,
The gods arrive. (1846)

BRAHMA

If the red slayer think he slays,
  Or if the slain think he is slain,
They know not well the subtle ways
  I keep, and pass, and turn again.

*The philosopher Emerson was also a poet. His uneventful life in Concord as an essayist and lecturer need not be chronicled here, except to remind the student that he broke with the ministerial tradition of his ancestors, and though trained as a minister himself, gave up his charge because he no longer believed in certain tenets of the Unitarian church. It should also be remembered that Emerson was a friend of Carlyle, and that his philosophy was well known abroad even during his own lifetime. See headnote, page II-516.

Concord Hymn. An American version of the spirit expressed in "Fredome" (page 348), "Patriotism" (page 472), and "Of Old Sat Freedom on the Heights" (page 529).

Brahma. Brahma, to the Hindu, is the spirit of the universe, of whom the other Hindu gods are but lesser manifestations. The sacred Seven (line 14) are probably the divine and active principles governing the Hindu universe. This poem is interesting as a reflection of the American mind upon the Indian view of Fate. Cf. "The Hound of Heaven" (page 591) and "Self-Deception" (page 578).

Far or forgot to me is near; 5
Shadow and sunlight are the same;
The vanished gods to me appear;
And one to me are shame and fame.

They reckon ill who leave me out;
When me they fly, I am the wings;
I am the doubter and the doubt, 11
And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.

The strong gods pine for my abode,
And pine in vain the sacred Seven;
But thou, meek lover of the good! 15
Find me, and turn thy back on heaven.
(1857)

*HENRY TIMROD (1828-1867)

SONNET

Life ever seems as from its present site
It aimed to lure us. Mountains of the past
It melts, with all their crags and cavern vast,
Into a purple cloud! Across the night,
Which hides what is to be, it shoots a light 5
All rosy with the yet unriven dawn.
Not the near daisies, but yon distant height
Attracts us, lying on this emerald lawn.
And always, be the landscape what it may—
Blue, misty hill or sweep of glimmering plain— 10
It is the eye's endeavor still to gain
The fine, faint limit of the bounding day.
God, haply, in this mystic mode, would fain
Hint of a happier home, far, far away!
(1860)

*Timrod was born in Charleston, South Carolina. After two years in the University of Georgia he became first a teacher and later a private tutor. His health was impaired in 1836 on the military expedition against the Seminole Indians, and he died in 1867. Timrod was a poet of genuine ability, whose emotional intensity in his best work breaks through the conventional and elaborate expression with which nineteenth-century American poets cloaked their thoughts. The beauty of his verse appears best in his personal reflections upon life.

SONNET

I scarcely grieve, O Nature! at the lot
That pent my life within a city's bounds,
And shut me from thy sweetest sights and sounds.
Perhaps I had not learned, if some lone cot
Had nursed a dreamy childhood, what the mart 5
Taught me amid its turmoil; so my youth
Had missed full many a stern but wholesome truth.
Here, too, O Nature! in this haunt of Art,
Thy power is on me, and I own thy thrall. 9
There is no unimpressive spot on earth!
The beauty of the stars is over all,
And Day and Darkness visit every hearth.
Clouds do not scorn us; yonder factory's smoke
Looked like a golden mist when morning broke.
(1860)

SONNET

I know not why, but all this weary day,
Suggested by no definite grief or pain,
Sad fancies have been flitting through my brain;
Now it has been a vessel losing way,
Rounding a stormy headland; now a gray 5
Dull waste of clouds above a wintry main;
And then, a banner, drooping in the rain,
And meadows beaten into bloody clay.
Strolling at random with this shadowy woe
At heart, I chanced to wander hither! Lo! 10
A league of desolate marsh-land, with its lush,
Hot grasses in a noisome, tide-left bed,
And faint, warm airs, that rustle in the hush,
Like whispers round the body of the dead!
(1860)

Sonnet (I scarcely grieve, O Nature!). Cf. "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" (page 633). Timrod here gives expression to the beauty which may be found in urban life. The picture changes in "Chicago" (page 708).

*PAUL HAMILTON HAYNE
(1830-1886)

THE FIRST MOCKING-BIRD IN SPRING

Winged poet of vernal ethers!
  Ah! where hast thou lingered long?
I have missed thy passionate, skyward flights
  And the trills of thy changeful song.
Hast thou been in the hearts of woodlands old, 5
Half dreaming, and, drowsed by the winter's cold,
Just crooning the ghost of thy springtide lay
To the listless shadows, benumbed and gray?
Or hast thou strayed by a tropic shore,
And lavished, O silvan troubadour! 10
The boundless wealth of thy music free
On the dimpling waves of the Southland sea?
What matter? Thou comest with magic strain
To the morning haunts of thy life again,
And thy melodies fall in a rhythmic rain. 15

The wren and the field-lark listen
  To the gush from their laureate's throat;
And the bluebird stops on the oak to catch
  Each rounded and perfect note. 19
The sparrow, his pert head reared aloft,
Has ceased to chirp in the grassy croft,
And is bending the curves of his tiny ear
In the *pose* of a critic wise, to hear.
A blackbird, perched on a glistening gum,
Seems lost in a rapture, deep and dumb;
And as eagerly still in his trancéd hush,
'Mid the copse beneath, is a clear-eyed thrush. 27

No longer the dove by the thorn-tree root
Moans sad and soft as a far-off flute.
All Nature is hearkening, charmed and mute. 30

We scarce can deem it a marvel,
  For the songs *our* nightingale sings
Throb warm and sweet with the rhythmic beat
  Of the fervors of countless springs.
All beautiful measures of sky and earth
Outpour in a second and rarer birth 36
From that mellow throat. When the winds are whist,
And he follows his mate to their sunset tryst,
Where the wedded myrtles and jasmine twine, 39
Oh! the swell of his music is half divine!
And I vaguely wonder, O bird! can it be
That a human spirit hath part in thee?
Some Lesbian singer's, who died perchance
Too soon in the summer of Greek romance, 44
But the rich reserves of whose broken lay,
In some mystical, wild, undreamed-of way,
Find voice in thy bountiful strains today!

(AFTER 1872)

UNDER THE PINE

TO THE MEMORY OF HENRY TIMROD

The same majestic pine is lifted high
Against the twilight sky,
The same low, melancholy music grieves
Amid the topmost leaves,
As when I watched, and mused, and dreamed with him 5
Beneath these shadows dim.

O Tree! hast thou no memory at thy core
Of one who comes no more?
No yearning memory of those scenes that were
So richly calm and fair, 10
When the last rays of sunset, shimmering down,
Flashed like a royal crown?

*Hayne was not so great a poet as Timrod. Born in Charleston, and graduated from Charleston College, he prepared to be a literary editor, but the Civil War terminated the career of the magazine on which he was engaged. After the war he continued to live by writing, but the necessity of turning out sufficient verse for this purpose drained his poetic vitality. Some of his poems are charming, especially the three given here.

The First Mocking-Bird in Spring. This poem and "To a Waterfowl" (page 636) are American counterparts of the English nineteenth-century nightingale poems.

37. **whist**, silent. 43. **Lesbian**, from the Greek island of Lesbos, where Sappho, the poetess lived.

And he, with hand outstretched and eyes ablaze,
Looked forth with burning gaze,
And seemed to drink the sunset like strong wine, 15
Or, hushed in trance divine,
Hailed the first shy and timorous glance from far
Of evening's virgin star?

O Tree! against thy mighty trunk he laid
His weary head; thy shade 20
Stole o'er him like the first cool spell of sleep.
It brought a peace *so* deep
The unquiet passion died from out his eyes,
As lightning from stilled skies.

And in that calm he loved to rest, and hear 25
The soft wind-angels, clear
And sweet, among the uppermost branches sighing.
Voices he heard replying
(Or so he dreamed) far up the mystic height,
And pinions rustling light. 30

O Tree! have not his poet-touch, his dreams
So full of heavenly gleams,
Wrought through the folded dullness of thy bark,
And all thy nature dark
Stirred to slow throbbings, and the fluttering fire 35
Of faint, unknown desire?

At least to me there sweeps no rugged ring
That girds the forest-king,
No immemorial stain, or awful rent
(The mark of tempest spent), 40
No delicate leaf, no lithe bough, vine-o'ergrown,
No distant, flickering cone,

But speaks of him, and seems to bring once more
The joy, the love of yore;
But most when breathed from out the sunset-land 45
The sunset airs are bland,
That blow between the twilight and the night,
Ere yet the stars are bright;

For then that quiet eve comes back to me,
When, deeply, thrillingly, 50
He spake of lofty hopes which vanquish Death;
And on his mortal breath
A language of immortal meanings hung,
That fired his heart and tongue.

For then unearthly breezes stir and sigh,
Murmuring, "Look up! 'tis I; 56
Thy friend is near thee! Ah, thou canst not see!"
And through the sacred tree
Passes what seems a wild and sentient thrill—
Passes, and all is still!— 60

Still as the grave which holds his tranquil form,
Hushed after many a storm—
Still as the calm that crowns his marble brow,
No pain can wrinkle now—
Still as the peace—pathetic peace of God— 65
That wraps the holy sod,

Where every flower from our dead minstrel's dust
Should bloom, a type of trust—
That faith which waxed to wings of heavenward might
To bear his soul from night— 70
That faith, dear Christ! whereby we pray to meet
His spirit at God's feet! (1872)

IN HARBOR

I think it is over, over,
I think it is over at last,
Voices of foeman and lover,
The sweet and the bitter have passed.
Life, like a tempest of ocean 5
Hath outblown its ultimate blast;
There's but a faint sobbing sea-ward

In Harbor. A comparison of this poem with "Crossing the Bar" (page 547) will illustrate how excess diction may obscure a really fine poetic conception.

While the calm of the tide deepens leeward,
And behold! like the welcoming quiver
Of heart-pulses throbbed through the river,
Those lights in the harbor at last, 11
The heavenly harbor at last!

I feel it is over, over!
For the winds and the waters surcease;
Ah!—few were the days of the rover 15
That smiled in the beauty of peace!
And distant and dim was the omen
That hinted redress or release:
From the ravage of life, and its riot
What marvel I yearn for the quiet 20
Which bides in the harbor at last?
For the lights with their welcoming quiver
That throbbed through the sanctified river
Which girdles the harbor at last,
This heavenly harbor at last? 25

I know it is over, over,
I know it is over at last!
Down sail! the sheathed anchor uncover,
For the stress of the voyage has passed;
Life, like a tempest of ocean, 30
Hath outbreathed its ultimate blast;
There's but a faint sobbing sea-ward;
While the calm of the tide deepens leeward;
And behold! like the welcoming quiver
Of heart-pulses throbbed through the river, 35
Those lights in the harbor at last,
The heavenly harbor at last!

(AFTER 1872)

*WALT WHITMAN (1819-1892)

IN CABINED SHIPS AT SEA

In cabined ships at sea,
The boundless blue on every side expanding,
With whistling winds and music of the waves, the large imperious waves,
Or some lone bark buoyed on the dense marine,
Where joyous full of faith, spreading white sails, 5
She cleaves the ether mid the sparkle and the foam of day, or under many a star at night,
By sailors young and old haply will I, a reminiscence of the land, be read,
In full rapport at last.

Here are our thoughts, voyagers' thoughts,
Here not the land, firm land, alone appears, may then by them be said,
The sky o'erarches here, we feel the undulating deck beneath our feet, 11
We feel the long pulsation, ebb and flow of endless motion,
The tones of unseen mystery, the vague and vast suggestions of the briny world, the liquid-flowing syllables,
The perfume, the faint creaking of the cordage, the melancholy rhythm,
The boundless vista and the horizon far and dim are all here, 15
And this is ocean's poem.

Then falter not, O book, fulfill your destiny,
You not a reminiscence of the land alone,
You, too, as a lone bark cleaving the ether, purposed I know not whither, yet ever full of faith, 19
Consort to every ship that sails, sail you!
Bear forth to them folded, my love (dear mariners, for you I fold it here in every leaf);

*Biography does not explain the achievement of Walt Whitman. He was born in Huntington, Long Island, went to school in Brooklyn, was a teacher for two years, and finally entered upon newspaper writing in New York City and its environs. Between 1848 and 1850 he traveled slowly west, then down the Mississippi River to New Orleans, and then north and home by way of the Great Lakes and an excursion into Canada. *Leaves of Grass* was published in 1855. During the Civil War Whitman served as a nurse in the army hospitals of Washington. The strain was too much for his health, and in 1873 he had a paralytic stroke which made him an invalid for the rest of his life. From 1882 until the end of his life he lived in Camden, New Jersey, in straitened circumstances. Although Whitman's poetry is uneven, it is impressive in its absolute straightforwardness, and in the freedom of its verse form. Whitman said what he wanted without regard for convention. The result is frequently bizarre because he fails to discriminate between beautiful values and grotesque cheapness. Nevertheless, Whitman's intense and vital appreciation of the primal in life, especially in the growing life of America, made him a liberating force for American literature. With *Leaves of Grass* he broke the shackles of convention and bade the future generation of American poets write about what they felt in whatever form they chose.

In Cabined Ships at Sea. Compare this poem with "Sonnet LX" of Shakespeare (page 365) and with "A Passer-by" (page 605) by Bridges. 17. **O book**, i. e., *Leaves of Grass*, his principal volume of poems.

Speed on, my book! spread your white sails, my little bark, athwart the imperious waves,
Chant on, sail on, bear o'er the boundless blue from me to every sea,
This song for mariners and all their ships. (1871)

ME IMPERTURBE

Me imperturbe, standing at ease in Nature,
Master of all, or mistress of all—aplomb in the midst of irrational things,
Imbued as they—passive, receptive, silent as they,
Finding my occupation, poverty, notoriety, foibles, crimes, less important than I thought;
Me private, or public, or menial, or solitary—all these subordinate (I am eternally equal with the best—I am not subordinate); 5
Me toward the Mexican Sea, or in the Mannahatta, or the Tennessee, or far north, or inland,
A river man, or a man of the woods, or of any farm-life in these states, or of the coast, or the lakes, or Kanada,
Me, wherever my life is lived, O to be self-balanced for contingencies!
O to confront night, storms, hunger, ridicule, accidents, rebuffs, as the trees and animals do. 1860 (1881)

I HEAR AMERICA SINGING

I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear:
Those of mechanics—each one singing his, as it should be, blithe and strong;
The carpenter singing his, as he measures his plank or beam;
The mason singing his, as he makes ready for work, or leaves off work;
The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat—the deckhand singing on the steamboat deck; 5
The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench—the hatter singing as he stands;
The wood-cutter's song—the plowboy's, on his way in the morning, or at the noon intermission, or at sundown;
The delicious singing of the mother—or of the young wife at work—or of the girl sewing or washing—each singing what belongs to her, and to none else;
The day what belongs to the day—at night, the party of young fellows, robust, friendly,
Singing, with open mouths, their strong melodious songs. 1860 (1867)

CROSSING BROOKLYN FERRY

1

Flood-tide below me! I watch you face to face;
Clouds of the west! sun there half an hour high! I see you also face to face.

Crowds of men and women attired in the usual costumes! how curious you are to me!
On the ferryboats, the hundreds and hundreds that cross, returning home, are more curious to me than you suppose;
And you that shall cross from shore to shore years hence, are more to me, and more in my meditations, than you might suppose. 5

2

The impalpable sustenance of me from all things, at all hours of the day;

Me Imperturbe. "Me imperturbable." This poem represents Whitman's attitude toward life and shows both his strength and his weakness. 6. **Mannahatta.** Manhattan.

I Hear America Singing. This poem reveals what Whitman added to modern poetry. Cf. "The Solitary Reaper" (page 460) and "The Song of the Shirt" (page 476), both of which are in a different mood from that which Whitman developed in the group of modern American poets, the spirit of whose work is embodied in this poem.

Crossing Brooklyn Ferry. "Composed upon Westminster Bridge" (page 468) should be contrasted with this poem, for Whitman opens up a field which Wordsworth left untouched. Cf. the poems in this book by J. G. Fletcher (pages 712-717).

The simple, compact, well-joined scheme —myself disintegrated, everyone disintegrated, yet part of the scheme;
The similitudes of the past, and those of the future;
The glories strung like beads on my smallest sights and hearings—on the walk in the street, and the passage over the river;
The current rushing so swiftly, and swimming with me far away; 10
The others that are to follow me, the ties between me and them;
The certainty of others—the life, love, sight, hearing of others.

Others will enter the gates of the ferry, and cross from shore to shore;
Others will watch the run of the flood-tide;
Others will see the shipping of Manhattan north and west, and the heights of Brooklyn to the south and east; 15
Others will see the islands large and small;
Fifty years hence, others will see them as they cross, the sun half an hour high;
A hundred years hence, or ever so many hundred years hence, others will see them,
Will enjoy the sunset, the pouring in of the flood-tide, the falling back to the sea of the ebb-tide.

3

It avails not, neither time or place—distance avails not; 20
I am with you, you men and women of a generation, or ever so many generations hence;
I project myself—also I return—I am with you, and know how it is.
Just as you feel when you look on the river and sky, so I felt;
Just as any of you is one of a living crowd, I was one of a crowd;
Just as you are refreshed by the gladness of the river and the bright flow, I was refreshed; 25
Just as you stand and lean on the rail, yet hurry with the swift current, I stood, yet was hurried;
Just as you look on the numberless masts of ships, and the thick-stemmed pipes of steamboats, I looked.

I, too, many and many a time crossed the river, the sun half an hour high;
I watched the twelfth-month sea-gulls—I saw them high in the air, floating with motionless wings, oscillating their bodies;
I saw how the glistening yellow lit up parts of their bodies, and left the rest in strong shadow; 30
I saw the slow-wheeling circles, and the gradual edging toward the south.

I, too, saw the reflection of the summer sky in the water,
Had my eyes dazzled by the shimmering track of beams,
Looked at the fine centrifugal spokes of light around the shape of my head in the sun-lit water,
Looked on the haze on the hills southward and southwestward, 35
Looked on the vapor as it flew in fleeces tinged with violet,
Looked toward the lower bay to notice the arriving ships,
Saw their approach, saw aboard those that were near me,
Saw the white sails of schooners and sloops—saw the ships at anchor,
The sailors at work in the rigging, or out astride the spars, 40
The round masts, the swinging motion of the hulls, the slender, serpentine pennants,
The large and small steamers in motion, the pilots in their pilot-houses,
The white wake left by the passage, the quick tremulous whirl of the wheels,
The flags of all nations, the falling of them at sunset,
The scallop-edged waves in the twilight, the ladled cups, the frolicsome crests and glistening, 45

29. **twelfth-month**, remaining all the year.

The stretch afar growing dimmer and dimmer, the gray walls of the granite storehouses by the docks,
On the river the shadowy group, the big steam-tug closely flanked on each side by the barges—the hay-boat, the belated lighter,
On the neighboring shore, the fires from the foundry chimneys burning high and glaringly into the night,
Casting their flicker of black, contrasted with wild red and yellow light, over the tops of houses, and down into the clefts of streets.

4

These, and all else, were to me the same as they are to you; 50
I project myself a moment to tell you—also I return.

I loved well those cities;
I loved well the stately and rapid river;
The men and women I saw were all near to me;
Others the same—others who look back on me, because I looked forward to them. 55
(The time will come, though I stop here today and tonight.)

5

What is it, then, between us?
What is the count of the scores or hundreds of years between us?

Whatever it is, it avails not—distance avails not, and place avails not.

6

I, too, lived—Brooklyn, of ample hills, was mine; 60
I, too, walked the streets of Manhattan Island, and bathed in the waters around it;
I, too, felt the curious abrupt questionings stir within me,
In the day, among crowds of people, sometimes they came upon me,
In my walks home late at night, or as I lay in my bed, they came upon me.

I, too, had been struck from the float forever held in solution; 65
I, too, had received identity by my body;
That I was, I knew was of my body—and what I should be, I knew I should be of my body.

7

It is not upon you alone the dark patches fall,
The dark patches threw down upon me also;
The best I had done seemed to me blank and suspicious; 70
My great thoughts, as I supposed them, were they not in reality meager? would not people laugh at them?

It is not you alone who knows what it is to be evil;
I am he who knew what it was to be evil;
I, too, knitted the old knot of contrariety,
Blabbed, blushed, resented, lied, stole, grudged, 75
Had guile, anger, lust, hot wishes I dared not speak,
Was wayward, vain, greedy, shallow, sly, cowardly, malignant;
The wolf, the snake, the hog not wanting in me,
The cheating look, the frivolous word, the adulterous wish, not wanting,
Refusals, hates, postponements, meanness, lazinesss, none of these wanting. 80

8

But I was Manhattanese, friendly and proud!
I was called by my nighest name by clear, loud voices of young men as they saw me approaching or passing;
Felt their arms on my neck as they stood, or the negligent leaning of their flesh against me as I sat,
Saw many I loved in the street, or ferry-boat, or public assembly, yet never told them a word,

Lived the same life with the rest, the same old laughing, gnawing, sleeping, 85
Played the part that still looks back on the actor or actress,
The same old rôle, the rôle that is what we make it, as great as we like,
Or as small as we like, or both great and small.

9

Closer yet I approach you;
What thought you have of me, I had as much of you—I laid in my stores in advance; 90
I considered long and seriously of you before you were born.

Who was to know what should come home to me?
Who knows but I am enjoying this?
Who knows but I am as good as looking at you now, for all you cannot see me?

It is not you alone, nor I alone; 95
Not a few races, nor a few generations, nor a few centuries;
It is that each came, or comes, or shall come, from its due emission,
From the general center of all, and forming a part of all.
Everything indicates—the smallest does, and the largest does;
A necessary film envelops all, and envelops the Soul for a proper time. 100

10

Now I am curious what sight can ever be more stately and admirable to me than my mast-hemmed Manhattan,
My river and sunset, and my scallop-edged waves of flood-tide,
The sea-gulls oscillating their bodies, the hay-boat in the twilight, and the belated lighter;
Curious what gods can exceed these that clasp me by the hand, and with voices I love call me promptly and loudly by my nighest name as I approach;
Curious what is more subtle than this which ties me to the woman or man that looks in my face, 105
Which fuses me into you now, and pours my meaning into you.

We understand, then, do we not?
What I promised without mentioning it, have you not accepted?
What the study could not teach—what the preaching could not accomplish, is accomplished, is it not?
What the push of reading could not start, is started by me personally, is it not? 110

11

Flow on, river! flow with the flood-tide, and ebb with the ebb-tide!
Frolic on, crested and scallop-edged waves!
Gorgeous clouds of the sunset! drench with your splendor me, or the men and women generations after me;
Cross from shore to shore, countless crowds of passengers!
Stand up, tall masts of Mannahatta!—stand up, beautiful hills of Brooklyn! 115
Throb, baffled and curious brain! throw out questions and answers!
Suspend here and everywhere, eternal float of solution!
Gaze, loving and thirsting eyes, in the house, or street, or public assembly!
Sound out, voices of young men! loudly and musically call me by my nighest name!
Live, old life! play the part that looks back on the actor or actress! 120
Play the old rôle, the rôle that is great or small, according as one makes it!
Consider, you who peruse me, whether I may not in unknown ways be looking upon you;
Be firm, rail over the river, to support those who lean idly, yet haste with the hasting current;
Fly on, sea-birds! fly sideways, or wheel in large circles high in the air;
Receive the summer sky, you water! and faithfully hold it, till all downcast eyes have time to take it from you;

Diverge, fine spokes of light, from the shape of my head, or anyone's head, in the sun-lit water; 126
Come on, ships from the lower bay! pass up or down, white-sailed schooners, sloops, lighters!
Flaunt away, flags of all nations! be duly lowered at sunset;
Burn high your fires, foundry chimneys! cast black shadows at nightfall! cast red and yellow light over the tops of the houses;
Appearances, now or henceforth, indicate what you are; 130
You necessary film, continue to envelop the soul;
About my body for me, and your body for you, be hung our divinest aromas;
Thrive, cities! bring your freight, bring your shows, ample and sufficient rivers;
Expand, being than which none else is perhaps more spiritual;
Keep your places, objects than which none else is more lasting. 135

12

We descend upon you and all things—we arrest you all;
We realize the soul only by you, you faithful solids and fluids;
Through you color, form, location, sublimity, ideality;
Through you every proof, comparison, and all the suggestions and determinations of ourselves.

You have waited, you always wait, you dumb, beautiful ministers! you novices! 140
We receive you with free sense at last, and are insatiate henceforward;
Not you any more shall be able to foil us, or withhold yourselves from us;
We use you, and do not cast you aside—we plant you permanently within us;
We fathom you not—we love you—there is perfection in you also; 144
You furnish your parts toward eternity,
Great or small, you furnish your parts toward the soul. 1856 (1881)

OUT OF THE CRADLE ENDLESSLY ROCKING

Out of the cradle endlessly rocking,
Out of the mocking-bird's throat, the musical shuttle,
Out of the ninth-month midnight,
Over the sterile sands and the fields beyond, where the child leaving his bed wandered alone, bareheaded, barefoot,
Down from the showered halo, 5
Up from the mystic play of shadows twining and twisting as if they were alive,
Out from the patches of briers and blackberries,
From the memories of the bird that chanted to me,
From your memories, sad brother, from the fitful risings and fallings I heard,
From under that yellow half-moon late-risen and swollen as if with tears, 10
From those beginning notes of yearning and love there in the mist,
From the thousand responses of my heart never to cease,
From the myriad thence-aroused words,
From the word stronger and more delicious than any,
From such as now they start the scene revisiting, 15
As a flock, twittering, rising, or overhead passing,
Borne hither, ere all eludes me, hurriedly,
A man, yet by these tears a little boy again,
Throwing myself on the sand, confronting the waves,
I, chanter of pains and joys, uniter of here and hereafter, 20
Taking all hints to use them, but swiftly leaping beyond them,
A reminiscence sing.

Once Paumanok,
When the lilac-scent was in the air and fifth-month grass was growing,

Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking. The original title of this poem was "A Child's Reminiscence." It is Whitman at his best, combining childhood memories, the splendors of nature, the questioning of the great riddle of life, and the poet's love of it all. It represents a new birth of the Anglo-Saxon ideals of life. 23. **Paumanok**, the Indian name for Long Island. Whitman used Indian names wherever possible.

Up this seashore in some briers, 25
Two feathered guests from Alabama, two together,
And their nest, and four light-green eggs, spotted with brown,
And every day the he-bird to and fro near at hand,
And every day the she-bird crouched on her nest, silent, with bright eyes,
And every day I, a curious boy, never too close, never disturbing them, 30
Cautiously peering, absorbing, translating.

Shine! shine! shine!
Pour down your warmth, great sun!
While we bask, we two together.

Two together! 35
Winds blow south, or winds blow north,
Day come white, or night come black,
Home, or rivers and mountains from home,
Singing all time, minding no time,
While we two keep together. 40

Till of a sudden,
Maybe killed, unknown to her mate,
One forenoon the she-bird crouched not on the nest,
Nor returned that afternoon, nor the next,
Nor ever appeared again. 45

And thenceforward all summer in the sound of the sea,
And at night under the full of the moon in calmer weather,
Over the hoarse surging of the sea,
Or flitting from brier to brier by day,
I saw, I heard at intervals the remaining one, the he-bird, 50
The solitary guest from Alabama.

Blow! blow! blow!
Blow up sea-winds along Paumanok's shore!
I wait and I wait till you blow my mate to me.

Yes, when the stars glistened, 55
All night long on the prong of a moss-scalloped stake,
Down almost amid the slapping waves,
Sat the lone singer wonderful causing tears.
He called on his mate,
He poured forth the meanings which I of all men know. 60

Yes, my brother, I know;
The rest might not, but I have treasured every note;
For more than once dimly down to the beach gliding,
Silent, avoiding the moonbeams, blending myself with the shadows,
Recalling now the obscure shapes, the echoes, the sounds and sights after their sorts, 65
The white arms out in the breakers tirelessly tossing,
I, with bare feet, a child, the wind wafting my hair,
Listened long and long.

Listened to keep, to sing, now translating the notes,
Following you, my brother. 70

Soothe! soothe! soothe!
Close on its wave soothes the wave behind,
And again another behind embracing and lapping, every one close,
But my love soothes not me, not me.

Low hangs the moon, it rose late, 75
It is lagging—O I think it is heavy with love, with love.

O madly the sea pushes upon the land,
With love, with love.

O night! do I not see my love fluttering out among the breakers?
What is that little black thing I see there in the white? 80

Loud! loud! loud!
Loud I call to you, my love!
High and clear I shoot my voice over the waves,
Surely you must know who is here, is here,
You must know who I am, my love. 85

Low-hanging moon!
What is that dusky spot in your brown yellow?

O it is the shape, the shape of my mate!
O moon do not keep her from me any longer.

Land! land! O land! 90
Whichever way I turn, O I think you could give me my mate back again if you only would,
For I am almost sure I see her dimly whichever way I look.

O rising stars!
Perhaps the one I want so much will rise, will rise with some of you.

O throat! O trembling throat! 95
Sound clearer through the atmosphere!
Pierce the woods, the earth;
Somewhere listening to catch you must be the one I want.

Shake out carols!
Solitary here, the night's carols! 100
Carols of lonesome love! death's carols!
Carols under that lagging, yellow, waning moon!
O under that moon where she droops almost down into the sea!
O reckless despairing carols.

But soft! sink low! 105
Soft! let me just murmur,
And do you wait a moment you husky-noised sea,
For somewhere I believe I heard my mate responding to me,
So faint, I must be still, be still to listen,
But not altogether still, for then she might not come immediately to me. 110

Hither, my love!
Here I am! here!
With this just-sustained note I announce myself to you;
This gentle call is for you my love, for you.

Do not be decoyed elsewhere; 115
That is the whistle of the wind, it is not my voice,
That is the fluttering, the fluttering of the spray,
Those are the shadows of leaves.

O darkness! O in vain!
O I am very sick and sorrowful. 120
O brown halo in the sky near the moon, drooping upon the sea!
O troubled reflection in the sea!
O throat! O throbbing heart!
And I singing uselessly, uselessly all the night.

O past! O happy life! O songs of joy! 125
In the air, in the woods, over fields,
Loved! loved! loved! loved! loved!
But my mate no more, no more with me!
We two together no more.

The aria sinking, 130
All else continuing, the stars shining,
The winds blowing, the notes of the bird continuous echoing,
With angry moans the fierce old mother incessantly moaning,
On the sands of Paumanok's shore gray and rustling,
The yellow half-moon enlarged, sagging down, drooping, the face of the sea almost touching, 135
The boy ecstatic, with his bare feet the waves, with his hair the atmosphere dallying,
The love in the heart long pent, now loose, now at last tumultuously bursting,
The aria's meaning, the ears, the soul, swiftly depositing,
The strange tears down the cheeks coursing,
The colloquy there, the trio, each uttering, 140
The undertone, the savage old mother incessantly crying,
To the boy's soul's questions sullenly timing, some drowned secret hissing,
To the outsetting bard.

Demon or bird (said the boy's soul)!
Is it indeed toward your mate you sing? or is it really to me? 145
For I, that was a child, my tongue's use sleeping, now I have heard you,
Now in a moment I know what I am for, I awake,
And already a thousand singers, a thousand songs, clearer, louder, and more sorrowful than yours,
A thousand warbling echoes have started to life within me, never to die.

O you singer solitary, singing by yourself, projecting me,
O solitary me listening, never more shall I cease perpetuating you,
Never more shall I escape, never more the reverberations,
Never more the cries of unsatisfied love be absent from me,
Never again leave me to be the peaceful child I was before what there in the night,
By the sea under the yellow and sagging moon,
The messenger there aroused, the fire, the sweet hell within,
The unknown want, the destiny of me.

O give me the clew (it lurks in the night here somewhere)!
O if I am to have so much, let me have more!

A word then (for I will conquer it),
The word final, superior to all,
Subtle, sent up—what is it?—I listen;
Are you whispering it, and have been all the time, you sea-waves?
Is that it from your liquid rims and wet sands?

Whereto answering, the sea,
Delaying not, hurrying not,
Whispered me through the night, and very plainly before daybreak,
Lisped to me the low and delicious word death,
And again death, death, death, death,
Hissing melodious, neither like the bird nor like my aroused child's heart,
But edging near as privately for me rustling at my feet,
Creeping thence steadily up to my ears and laving me softly all over,
Death, death, death, death, death.

Which I do not forget,
But fuse the song of my dusky demon and brother,
That he sang to me in the moonlight on Paumanok's gray beach,
With the thousand responsive songs at random,
My own songs awaked from that hour,
And with them the key, the word up from the waves,
The word of the sweetest song and all songs,
That strong and delicious word which, creeping to my feet
(Or like some old crone rocking the cradle, swathed in sweet garments, bending aside),
The sea whispered me. 1859 (1881)

VIGIL STRANGE I KEPT ON THE FIELD ONE NIGHT

Vigil strange I kept on the field one night.
When you, my son and my comrade, dropped at my side that day,
One look I but gave, which your dear eyes returned, with a look I shall never forget;
One touch of your hand to mine, O boy, reached up as you lay on the ground;
Then onward I sped in the battle, the even-contested battle;
Till late in the night relieved, to the place at last again I made my way;
Found you in death so cold, dear comrade—found your body, son of responding kisses (never again on earth responding);
Bared your face in the starlight—curious the scene—cool blew the moderate night-wind.
Long there and then in vigil I stood, dimly around me the battlefield spreading;
Vigil wondrous and vigil sweet, there in the fragrant silent night;
But not a tear fell, not even a long-drawn sigh—long, long I gazed;
Then on the earth partially reclining, sat by your side, leaning my chin in my hands;
Passing sweet hours, immortal and mystic hours with you, dearest comrade—not a tear, not a word;
Vigil of silence, love and death—vigil for you my son and my soldier,
As onward silently stars aloft, eastward new ones upward stole;

Vigil Strange I Kept. Cf. "Pater Filio" (page 605). Modern war poetry owes much to Whitman. Cf. "Counter-Attack" (page 615) and the poems from "Battle" (page 622).

Vigil final for you, brave boy (I could not save you, swift was your death,
I faithfully loved you and cared for you living—I think we shall surely meet again);
Till at latest lingering of the night, indeed just as the dawn appeared,
My comrade I wrapped in his blanket, enveloped well his form,
Folded the blanket well, tucking it carefully over head, and carefully under feet; 20
And there and then, and bathed by the rising sun, my son in his grave, in his rude-dug grave I deposited;
Ending my vigil strange with that—vigil of night and battlefield dim;
Vigil for boy of responding kisses (never again on earth responding);
Vigil for comrade swiftly slain—vigil I never forget, how as day brightened,
I rose from the chill ground, and folded my soldier well in his blanket, 25
And buried him where he fell.

1865 (1867)

GIVE ME THE SPLENDID SILENT SUN

1

Give me the splendid silent sun with all his beams full-dazzling,
Give me juicy autumnal fruit ripe and red from the orchard,
Give me a field where the unmowed grass grows,
Give me an arbor, give me the trellised grape,
Give me fresh corn and wheat, give me serene-moving animals teaching content, 5
Give me nights perfectly quiet as on high plateaus west of the Mississippi, and I looking up at the stars,
Give me odorous at sunrise a garden of beautiful flowers where I can walk undisturbed,
Give me for marriage a sweet-breathed woman of whom I should never tire,
Give me a perfect child, give me, away, aside from the noise of the world, a rural, domestic life,
Give me to warble spontaneous songs recluse by myself, for my own ears only, 10
Give me solitude, give me Nature, give me again, O Nature, your primal sanities!

These demanding to have them (tired with ceaseless excitement, and racked by the war-strife),
These to procure incessantly asking, rising in cries from my heart,
While yet incessantly asking still I adhere to my city,
Day upon day and year upon year, O city, walking your streets, 15
Where you hold me enchained a certain time refusing to give me up,
Yet giving to make me glutted, enriched of soul, you give me forever faces;
(O I see what I sought to escape, confronting, reversing my cries,
I see my own soul trampling down what it asked for.)

2

Keep your splendid silent sun, 20
Keep your woods, O Nature, and the quiet places by the woods,
Keep your fields of clover and timothy, and your cornfields and orchards,
Keep the blossoming buckwheat fields where the ninth-month bees hum;
Give me faces and streets—give me these phantoms incessant and endless along the trottoirs!
Give me interminable eyes—give me women—give me comrades and lovers by the thousand! 25
Let me see new ones every day—let me hold new ones by the hand every day!
Give me such shows—give me the streets of Manhattan!
Give me Broadway, with the soldiers marching—give me the sound of the trumpets and drums!
(The soldiers in companies or regiments—some starting away, flushed and reckless,
Some, their time up, returning with thinned ranks, young, yet very old, worn, marching, noticing nothing;) 30

24. **trottoirs**, sidewalks.

Give me the shores and wharves heavy-fringed with black ships!
O such for me! O an intense life, full to repletion and varied!
The life of the theater, barroom, huge hotel, for me!
The saloon of the steamer! the crowded excursion for me! the torchlight procession!
The dense brigade bound for the war, with high-piled military wagons following; 35
People, endless, streaming, with strong voices, passions, pageants,
Manhattan streets with their powerful throbs, with beating drums as now,
The endless and noisy chorus, the rustle and clank of muskets (even the sight of the wounded),
Manhattan crowds, with their turbulent musical chorus!
Manhattan faces and eyes forever for me. 1865 (1867)

WHEN LILACS LAST IN THE DOORYARD BLOOMED

1

When lilacs last in the dooryard bloomed,
And the great star early drooped in the western sky in the night,
I mourned, and yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring.
Ever-returning spring, trinity sure to me you bring,
Lilac blooming perennial and drooping star in the west, 5
And thought of him I love.

2

O powerful western fallen star!
O shades of night—O moody, tearful night!
O great star disappeared—O the black murk that hides the star!
O cruel hands that hold me powerless—O helpless soul of me! 10
O harsh surrounding cloud that will not free my soul.

When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed. Written on the death of Lincoln. Of it Swinburne said, "The most sonorous anthem ever chanted in the church of the world."

3

In the dooryard fronting an old farmhouse near the whitewashed palings,
Stands the lilac-bush tall-growing with heart-shaped leaves of rich green,
With many a pointed blossom rising delicate, with the perfume strong I love,
With every leaf a miracle—and from this bush in the dooryard, 15
With delicate-colored blossoms and heart-shaped leaves of rich green,
A sprig with its flower I break.

4

In the swamp in secluded recesses,
A shy and hidden bird is warbling a song.

Solitary the thrush, 20
The hermit withdrawn to himself, avoiding the settlements,
Sings by himself a song.

Song of the bleeding throat,
Death's outlet song of life (for well, dear brother, I know,
If thou wast not granted to sing thou would'st surely die). 25

5

Over the breast of the spring, the land, amid cities,
Amid lanes and through old woods, where lately the violets peeped from the ground, spotting the gray débris,
Amid the grass in the fields each side of the lanes, passing the endless grass,
Passing the yellow-speared wheat, every grain from its shroud in the dark-brown fields uprisen,
Passing the apple-tree blows of white and pink in the orchards, 30
Carrying a corpse to where it shall rest in the grave,
Night and day journeys a coffin.

6

Coffin that passes through lanes and streets,
Through day and night with the great cloud darkening the land,

With the pomp of the inlooped flags with the cities draped in black, 35
With the show of the States themselves as of crape-veiled women standing,
With processions long and winding and the flambeaus of the night,
With the countless torches lit, with the silent sea of faces and the unbared heads,
With the waiting depot, the arriving coffin, and the somber faces,
With dirges through the night, with the thousand voices rising strong and solemn, 40
With all the mournful voices of the dirges poured around the coffin,
The dim-lit churches and the shuddering organs—where amid these you journey,
With the tolling, tolling bells' perpetual clang,
Here, coffin that slowly passes,
I give you my sprig of lilac. 45

7

(Nor for you, for one alone,
Blossoms and branches green to coffins all I bring,
For fresh as the morning, thus would I chant a song for you, O sane and sacred death.

All over bouquets of roses,
O death, I cover you over with roses and early lilies, 50
But mostly and now the lilac that blooms the first,
Copious I break, I break the sprigs from the bushes,
With loaded arms I come, pouring for you,
For you and the coffins all of you, O death.)

8

O western orb sailing the heaven, 55
Now I know what you must have meant as a month since I walked,
As I walked in silence the transparent shadowy night,
As I saw you had something to tell as you bent to me night after night,
As you drooped from the sky low down as if to my side (while the other stars all looked on),

37. flambeaus, torches.

As we wandered together the solemn night (for something I know not what kept me from sleep), 60
As the night advanced, and I saw on the rim of the west how full you were of woe,
As I stood on the rising ground in the breeze in the cool, transparent night,
As I watched where you passed, and was lost in the netherward black of the night,
As my soul in its trouble dissatisfied sank, as where you sad orb,
Concluded, dropped in the night, and was gone. 65

9

Sing on there in the swamp,
O singer bashful and tender, I hear your notes, I hear your call,
I hear, I come presently, I understand you;
But a moment I linger, for the lustrous star has detained me,
The star my departing comrade holds and detains me. 70

10

O how shall I warble myself for the dead one there I loved?
And how shall I deck my song for the large sweet soul that has gone?
And what shall my perfume be for the grave of him I love?

Sea-winds blown from east and west,
Blown from the Eastern sea and blown from the Western sea, till there on the prairies meeting, 75
These and with these and the breath of my chant,
I'll perfume the grave of him I love.

11

O what shall I hang on the chamber walls?
And what shall the pictures be that I hang on the walls,
To adorn the burial-house of him I love?

Pictures of growing spring and farms and homes, 81
With the fourth-month eve at sundown, and the gray smoke lucid and bright,

With floods of the yellow gold of the gorgeous, indolent, sinking sun, burning, expanding the air,
With the fresh sweet herbage under foot, and the pale green leaves of the trees prolific,
In the distance the flowing glaze, the breast of the river, with a wind-dapple here and there, 85
With ranging hills on the banks, with many a line against the sky, and shadows,
And the city at hand with dwellings so dense, and stacks of chimneys,
And all the scenes of life and the workshops, and the workmen homeward returning.

12

Lo, body and soul—this land,
My own Manhattan with spires, and the sparkling and hurrying tides, and the ships, 90
The varied and ample land, the South and the North in the light, Ohio's shores and flashing Missouri,
And ever the far-spreading prairies covered with grass and corn.

Lo, the most excellent sun so calm and haughty,
The violet and purple morn with just-felt breezes,
The gentle soft-born measureless light,
The miracle spreading bathing all, the fulfilled noon, 96
The coming eve delicious, the welcome night and the stars,
Over my cities shining all, enveloping man and land.

13

Sing on, sing on you gray-brown bird,
Sing from the swamps, the recesses, pour your chant from the bushes, 100
Limitless out of the dusk, out of the cedars and pines.
Sing on dearest brother, warble your reedy song,
Loud human song, with voice of uttermost woe.

O liquid and free and tender!
O wild and loose to my soul—O wondrous singer! 105
You only I hear—yet the star holds me (but will soon depart),
Yet the lilac with mastering odor holds me.

14

Now while I sat in the day and looked forth,
In the close of the day with its light and the fields of spring, and the farmers preparing their crops,
In the large unconscious scenery of my land with its lakes and forests, 110
In the heavenly aërial beauty (after the perturbed winds and the storms),
Under the arching heavens of the afternoon swift passing, and the voices of children and women,
The many-moving sea-tides, and I saw the ships how they sailed,
And the summer approaching with richness, and the fields all busy with labor,
And the infinite separate houses, how they all went on, each with its meals and minutia of daily usages, 115
And the streets how their throbbings throbbed, and the cities pent—lo, then and there,
Falling upon them all and among them all, enveloping me with the rest,
Appeared the cloud, appeared the long black trail,
And I knew death, its thought, and the sacred knowledge of death.

Then with the knowledge of death as walking one side of me, 120
And the thought of death close-walking the other side of me,
And I in the middle as with companions, and as holding the hands of companions,
I fled forth to the hiding receiving night that talks not,
Down to the shores of the water, the path by the swamp in the dimness,
To the solemn shadowy cedars and ghostly pines so still. 125

And the singer so shy to the rest received me,
The gray-brown bird I know received us comrades three,
And he sang the carol of death, and a verse for him I love.

From deep secluded recesses,
From the fragrant cedars and the ghostly pines so still, 130
Came the carol of the bird.

And the charm of the carol rapt me,
As I held as if by their hands my comrades in the night,
And the voice of my spirit tallied the song of the bird.

Come, lovely and soothing death, 135
Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving,
In the day, in the night, to all, to each,
Sooner or later delicate death.

Praised be the fathomless universe,
For life and joy, and for objects and knowledge curious, 140
And for love, sweet love—but praise! praise! praise!
For the sure-enwinding arms of cool-enfolding death.

Dark mother always gliding near with soft feet,
Have none chanted for thee a chant of fullest welcome?
Then I chant it for thee, I glorify thee above all, 145
I bring thee a song that when thou must indeed come, come unfalteringly.

Approach, strong deliveress,
When it is so, when thou hast taken them, I joyously sing the dead,
Lost in the loving floating ocean of thee,
Laved in the flood of thy bliss, O death. 150

From me to thee glad serenades,
Dances for thee I propose saluting thee, adornments and feastings for thee,
And the sights of the open landscape and the high-spread sky are fitting,
And life and the fields, and the huge and thoughtful night.

The night in silence under many a star, 155
The ocean shore and the husky whispering wave whose voice I know,
And the soul turning to thee, O vast and well-veiled death,
And the body gratefully nestling close to thee.

Over the tree-tops I float thee a song,
Over the rising and sinking waves, over the myriad fields and the prairies wide, 160
Over the dense-packed cities all and the teeming wharves and ways,
I float this carol with joy, with joy to thee O death.

15

To the tally of my soul,
Loud and strong kept up the gray-brown bird,
With pure deliberate notes spreading, filling the night. 165

Loud in the pines and cedars dim,
Clear in the freshness moist and the swamp-perfume,
And I with my comrades there in the night.

While my sight that was bound in my eyes unclosed,
As to long panoramas of visions. 170

And I saw askant the armies,
I saw as in noiseless dreams hundreds of battle-flags,
Borne through the smoke of the battles and pierced with missiles I saw them,
And carried hither and yon through the smoke, and torn and bloody,
And at last but a few shreds left on the staffs (and all in silence), 175
And the staffs all splintered and broken.

I saw battle-corpses, myriads of them,
And the white skeletons of young men, I saw them,
I saw the débris and débris of all the slain soldiers of the war,
But I saw they were not as was thought;
They themselves were fully at rest, they suffered not, 181
The living remained and suffered, the mother suffered,
And the wife and the child and the musing comrade suffered,
And the armies that remained suffered.

16

Passing the visions, passing the night,
Passing, unloosing the hold of my comrades' hands, 186

Passing the song of the hermit bird and the tallying song of my soul,
Victorious song, death's outlet song, yet varying ever-altering song,
As low and wailing, yet clear the notes, rising and falling, flooding the night,
Sadly sinking and fainting, as warning and warning, and yet again bursting with joy, 190

Covering the earth and filling the spread of the heaven,
As that powerful psalm in the night I heard from recesses,
Passing, I leave thee, lilac with heart-shaped leaves,
I leave thee there in the dooryard, blooming, returning with spring.

I cease from my song for thee, 195
From my gaze on thee in the west, fronting the west, communing with thee,
O comrade lustrous with silver face in the night.

Yet each to keep and all, retrievements out of the night,
The song, the wondrous chant of the gray-brown bird,
And the tallying chant, the echo aroused in my soul, 200
With the lustrous and drooping star with the countenance full of woe,
With the holders holding my hand nearing the call of the bird,
Comrades mine and I in the midst, and their memory ever to keep, for the dead I loved so well,
For the sweetest, wisest soul of all my days and lands—and this for his dear sake,
Lilac and star and bird twined with the chant of my soul, 205
There in the fragrant pines and the cedars dusk and dim.

1865-1866 (1881)

THERE WAS A CHILD WENT FORTH

There was a child went forth every day,
And the first object he looked upon, that object he became,
And that object became part of him for the day or a certain part of the day,
Or for many years or stretching cycles of years.

The early lilacs became part of this child, 5
And grass and white and red morning-glories, and white and red clover, and the song of the phoebe-bird,
And the third-month lambs and the sow's pink-faint litter, and the mare's foal and the cow's calf,
And the noisy brood of the barnyard or by the mire of the pond-side,
And the fish suspending themselves so curiously below there, and the beautiful curious liquid,
And the water-plants with their graceful flat heads, all became part of him. 10

The field-sprouts of fourth-month and fifth-month became part of him,
Winter-grain sprouts and those of the light-yellow corn, and the esculent roots of the garden,
And the apple-trees covered with blossoms and the fruit afterward, and wood-berries, and the commonest weeds by the road,
And the old drunkard staggering home from the outhouse of the tavern whence he had lately risen,
And the school-mistress that passed on her way to the school, 15
And the friendly boys that passed, and the quarrelsome boys,
And the tidy and fresh-cheeked girls, and the barefoot negro boy and girl,
And all the changes of city and country wherever he went.
His own parents, he that had fathered him and she that had conceived him in her womb and birthed him,
They gave this child more of themselves than that, 20
They gave him afterward every day, they became part of him.

The mother at home quietly placing the dishes on the supper-table,
The mother with mild words, clean her cap and gown, a wholesome odor falling off her person and clothes as she walks by,

There Was a Child Went Forth. The original title of this poem was "Poem of the Child That Went Forth and Always Goes Forth Forever and Forever."

The father, strong, self-sufficient, manly, mean, angered, unjust,
The blow, the quick loud word, the tight bargain, the crafty lure, 25
The family usages, the language, the company, the furniture, the yearning and swelling heart,
Affection that will not be gainsaid, the sense of what is real, the thought if after all it should prove unreal,
The doubts of daytime and the doubts of nighttime, the curious whether and how,
Whether that which appears so is so, or is it all flashes and specks?
Men and women crowding fast in the streets, if they are not flashes and specks, what are they? 30
The streets themselves and the façades of houses, and goods in the windows,
Vehicles, teams, the heavy-planked wharves, the huge crossing at the ferries,
The village on the highland seen from afar at sunset, the river between,
Shadows, aureola and mist, the light falling on roofs and gables of white or brown two miles off,
The schooner near by sleepily dropping down the tide, the little boat slack-towed astern, 35
The hurrying tumbling waves, quick-broken crests, slapping,
The strata of colored clouds, the long bar of maroon-tint away solitary by itself, the spread of purity it lies motionless in,
The horizon's edge, the flying sea-crow, the fragrance of salt marsh and shore mud—
These became part of that child who went forth every day, and who now goes, and will always go forth every day. 1855 (1871)

DAREST THOU NOW, O SOUL

Darest thou now, O soul,
Walk out with me toward the unknown region,
Where neither ground is for the feet nor any path to follow?
No map there, nor guide,
Nor voice sounding, nor touch of human hand, 5
Nor face with blooming flesh, nor lips, nor eyes, are in that land.

I know it not, O soul,
Nor dost thou; all is a blank before us;
All waits undreamed of in that region, that inaccessible land.

Till when the ties loosen, 10
All but the ties eternal, Time and Space,
Nor darkness, gravitation, sense, nor any bounds bounding us.

Then we burst forth, we float,
In Time and Space, O soul, prepared for them,
Equal, equipped at last (O joy! O fruit of all!) them to fulfill, O soul.
1868 (1881)

SONG AT SUNSET

Splendor of ended day floating and filling me,
Hour prophetic, hour resuming the past,
Inflating my throat, you divine average,
You earth and life till the last ray gleams I sing.

Open mouth of my soul uttering gladness, 5
Eyes of my soul seeing perfection,
Natural life of me faithfully praising things,
Corroborating forever the triumph of things.

Illustrious every one!
Illustrious what we name space, sphere of unnumbered spirits, 10
Illustrious the mystery of motion in all beings, even the tiniest insect,
Illustrious the attribute of speech, the senses, the body,
Illustrious the passing light—illustrious the pale reflection on the new moon in the western sky,
Illustrious whatever I see or hear or touch, to the last.

Good in all, 15
In the satisfaction and aplomb of animals,

In the annual return of the seasons,
In the hilarity of youth,
In the strength and flush of manhood,
In the grandeur and exquisiteness of old age, 20
In the superb vistas of death.

Wonderful to depart!
Wonderful to be here!
The heart, to jet the all-alike and innocent blood!
To breathe the air, how delicious! 25
To speak—to walk—to seize something by the hand!
To prepare for sleep, for bed, to look on my rose-colored flesh!
To be conscious of my body, so satisfied, so large!
To be this incredible god I am!
To have gone forth among other gods, these men and women I love. 30

Wonderful how I celebrate you and myself!
How my thoughts play subtly at the spectacles around!
How the clouds pass silently overhead!
How the earth darts on and on! and how the sun, moon, stars, dart on and on!
How the water sports and sings! (surely it is alive!) 35
How the trees rise and stand up, with strong trunks, with branches and leaves!
(Surely there is something more in each of the trees, some living soul.)

O amazement of things—even the least particle!
O spirituality of things!
O strain musical flowing through ages and continents, now reaching me and America! 40
I take your strong chords, intersperse them, and cheerfully pass them forward.

I, too, carol the sun, ushered or at noon, or as now, setting;
I, too, throb to the brain and beauty of the earth and of all the growths of the earth;
I, too, have felt the resistless call of myself.

As I steamed down the Mississippi, 45
As I wandered over the prairies,
As I have lived, as I have looked through my windows my eyes,
As I went forth in the morning, as I beheld the light breaking in the east,
As I bathed on the beach of the Eastern Sea, and again on the beach of the Western Sea,
As I roamed the streets of inland Chicago, whatever streets I have roamed, 50
Or cities or silent woods, or even amid the sights of war,
Wherever I have been I have charged myself with contentment and triumph.
I sing to the last the equalities modern or old,
I sing the endless finalés of things,
I say Nature continues, glory continues,
I praise with electric voice, 56
For I do not see one imperfection in the universe,
And I do not see one cause or result lamentable at last in the universe.

O setting sun! though the time has come,
I still warble under you, if none else does, unmitigated adoration.

1860 (1881)

*JOAQUIN MILLER (1841-1913)

COLUMBUS

Behind him lay the great Azores,
Behind the gates of Hercules;
Before him not the ghost of shores;
Before him only shoreless seas. 4
The good mate said: "Now must we pray,
For lo! the very stars are gone.
Brave Adm'r'l, speak; what shall I say?"
"Why, say: 'Sail on! sail on! and on!'"

"My men grow mutinous day by day; 9
My men grow ghastly wan and weak."
The stout mate thought of home; a spray
Of salt wave washed his swarthy cheek.
"What shall I say, brave Adm'r'l, say,

*An Indiana poet, who followed the frontier West and saw its life. Later he became a lawyer and a judge. His literary fame arose in England, not in America.

Columbus. 2. **gates of Hercules.** The ancients believed that Hercules set up a pillar on each side of the Straits of Gibraltar.

If we sight naught but seas at dawn?"
"Why, you shall say at break of day: 15
'Sail on! sail on! sail on! and on!'"

They sailed and sailed, as winds might blow,
Until at last the blanched mate said:
"Why, now not even God would know
Should I and all my men fall dead. 20
These very winds forget their way,
For God from these dread seas is gone.
Now speak, brave Adm'r'l; speak and say—"
He said: "Sail on! sail on! and on!"

They sailed. They sailed. Then spake the mate: 25
"This mad sea shows his teeth tonight.
He curls his lip, he lies in wait,
With lifted teeth, as if to bite!
Brave Adm'r'l, say but one good word:
What shall we do when hope is gone?" 30
The words leaped like a leaping sword:
"Sail on! sail on! sail on! and on!"

Then, pale and worn, he kept his deck,
And peered through darkness. Ah, that night
Of all dark nights! And then a speck—35
It grew, a starlit flag unfurled!
It grew to be time's burst of dawn.
He gained a world; he gave that world
Its grandest lesson: "On! sail on!"

(1896)

*SIDNEY LANIER (1842-1881)

SONG OF THE CHATTAHOOCHEE

Out of the hills of Habersham,
Down the valleys of Hall,
I hurry amain to reach the plain,
Run the rapid and leap the fall,
Split at the rock and together again, 5
Accept my bed, or narrow or wide,
And flee from folly on every side
With a lover's pain to attain the plain
Far from the hills of Habersham,
Far from the valleys of Hall. 10

All down the hills of Habersham,
All through the valleys of Hall,
The rushes cried, *Abide, abide,*
The willful waterweeds held me thrall,
The laving laurel turned my tide, 15
The ferns and the fondling grass said, *Stay,*
The dewberry dipped for to work delay,
And the little reeds sighed, *Abide, abide,*
Here in the hills of Habersham,
Here in the valleys of Hall. 20

High o'er the hills of Habersham,
Veiling the valleys of Hall,
The hickory told me manifold
Fair tales of shade; the poplar tall 24
Wrought me her shadowy self to hold;
The chestnut, the oak, the walnut, the pine
Overleaning, with flickering meaning and sign,
Said, *Pass not, so cold, these manifold*
Deep shades of the hills of Habersham,
These glades in the valleys of Hall. 30

And oft in the hills of Habersham,
And oft in the valleys of Hall,
The white quartz shone, and the smooth brook-stone
Did bar me of passage with friendly brawl,
And many a luminous jewel lone 35
—Crystals clear or a-cloud with mist,
Ruby, garnet, and amethyst—
Made lures with the lights of streaming stone
In the clefts of the hills of Habersham, 39
In the beds of the valleys of Hall.

But oh, not the hills of Habersham,
And oh, not the valleys of Hall
Avail; I am fain for to water the plain.
Downward the voices of Duty call—
Downward, to toil and be mixed with the main, 45
The dry fields burn, and the mills are to turn,
And a myriad flowers mortally yearn,
And the lordly main from beyond the plain
Calls o'er the hills of Habersham,
Calls through the valleys of Hall.

(1877)

*A brilliant Georgia writer who was both poet and musician. After graduation from Oglethorpe University the first in his class, he served through the Civil War, taught school for a time, and finally was forced by poor health to take up the less strenuous career of solo flutist in a Baltimore orchestra. Thereafter he combined music and writing until 1880, when he became a lecturer on English in Johns Hopkins University. He died the next year. Lanier's poetry is sensitive and beautifully phrased. His feeling for nature is exquisite in its simplicity and sincere affection.

Song of the Chattahoochee. The Chattahoochee is a river which bounds Georgia on the southeast. Cf. "The Brook" (page 544).

THE MOCKING BIRD

Superb and sole, upon a pluméd spray
That o'er the general leafage boldly grew,
He summed the woods in song; or typic drew
The watch of hungry hawks, the lone dismay
Of languid doves when long their lovers stray, 5
And all birds' passion-plays that sprinkle dew
At morn in brake or bosky avenue.
Whate'er birds did or dreamed, this bird could say.
Then down he shot, bounced airily along
The sward, twitched in a grasshopper, made song 10
Midflight, perched, prinked, and to his art again.
Sweet Science, this large riddle read me plain:
How may the death of that dull insect be
The life of yon trim Shakespeare on the tree? (1877)

THE MARSHES OF GLYNN

Glooms of the live-oaks, beautiful-braided and woven
With intricate shades of the vines that myriad-cloven
Clamber the forks of the multiform boughs—
Emerald twilights—
Virginal shy lights, 5
Wrought of the leaves to allure to the whisper of vows,
When lovers pace timidly down through the green colonnades
Of the dim sweet woods, of the dear dark woods,
Of the heavenly woods and glades,
That run to the radiant marginal sand-beach within 10
The wide sea-marshes of Glynn—

Beautiful glooms, soft dusks in the noon-day fire—
Wildwood privacies, closets of lone desire,
Chamber from chamber parted with wavering arras of leaves—
Cells for the passionate pleasure of prayer to the soul that grieves, 15
Pure with a sense of the passing of saints through the wood,
Cool for the dutiful weighing of ill with good—

O braided dusks of the oak and woven shades of the vine,
While the riotous noon-day sun of the June day long did shine
Ye held me fast in your heart and I held you fast in mine; 20
But now when the noon is no more, and riot is rest,
And the sun is a-wait at the ponderous gate of the west,
And the slant yellow beam down the wood-aisle doth seem
Like a lane into heaven that leads from a dream—
Aye, now, when my soul all day hath drunken the soul of the oak, 25
And my heart is at ease from men, and the wearisome sound of the stroke
Of the scythe of time and the trowel of trade is low,
And belief overmasters doubt, and I know that I know,
And my spirit is grown to a lordly great compass within,
That the length and the breadth and the sweep of the Marshes of Glynn 30
Will work me no fear like the fear they have wrought me of yore
When length was fatigue, and when breadth was but bitterness sore,
And when terror and shrinking and dreary unnamable pain
Drew over me out of the merciless miles of the plain—

Oh, now, unafraid, I am fain to face 35
The vast sweet visage of space.
To the edge of the wood I am drawn, I am drawn,
Where the gray beach glimmering runs, as a belt of the dawn,
For a mete and a mark

The Mocking Bird. 7. **bosky**, woody.
The Marshes of Glynn. These sea marshes are in Glynn County, Georgia.
39. **mete**, boundary.

To the forest-dark— 40
So:
Affable live-oak, leaning low—
Thus—with your favor—soft, with a reverent hand
(Not lightly touching your person, Lord of the land!),
Bending your beauty aside, with a step I stand 45
On the firm-packed sand,
Free
By a world of marsh that borders a world of sea.
Sinuous southward and sinuous northward the shimmering band
Of the sand-beach fastens the fringe of the marsh to the folds of the land.
Inward and outward to northward and southward the beach-lines linger and curl 51
As a silver-wrought garment that clings to and follows the firm sweet limbs of a girl.
Vanishing, swerving, evermore curving again into sight,
Softly the sand-beach wavers away to a dim gray looping of light.
And what if behind me to westward the wall of the woods stands high? 55
The world lies east; how ample, the marsh and the sea and the sky!
A league and a league of marsh-grass, waist-high, broad in the blade,
Green, and all of a height, and unflecked with a light or a shade,
Stretch leisurely off, in a pleasant plain,
To the terminal blue of the main. 60

Oh, what is abroad in the marsh and the terminal sea?
Somehow my soul seems suddenly free
From the weighing of fate and the sad discussion of sin,
By the length and the breadth and the sweep of the Marshes of Glynn.

Ye marshes, how candid and simple and nothing-withholding and free 65
Ye publish yourselves to the sky and offer yourselves to the sea!
Tolerant plains, that suffer the sea and the rains and the sun,
Ye spread and span like the catholic man who hath mightily won
God out of knowledge and good out of infinite pain
And sight out of blindness and purity out of a stain. 70
As the marsh-hen secretly builds on the watery sod,
Behold I will build me a nest on the greatness of God;
I will fly in the greatness of God as the marsh-hen flies
In the freedom that fills all the space 'twixt the marsh and the skies;
By so many roots as the marsh-grass sends in the sod 75
I will heartily lay me a-hold on the greatness of God.
Oh, like to the greatness of God is the greatness within
The range of the marshes, the liberal Marshes of Glynn.
And the sea lends large, as the marsh; lo, out of his plenty the sea
Pours fast; full soon the time of the flood-tide must be; 80
Look how the grace of the sea doth go
About and about through the intricate channels that flow
Here and there,
Everywhere,
Till his waters have flooded the uttermost creeks and the low-lying lanes,
And the marsh is meshed with a million veins, 86
That like as with rosy and silvery essences flow
In the rose-and-silver evening glow.
Farewell, my lord Sun!
The creeks overflow; a thousand rivulets run 90
'Twixt the roots of the sod; the blades of the marsh-grass stir;
Passeth a hurrying sound of wings that westward whirr;
Passeth, and all is still; and the currents cease to run;
And the sea and the marsh are one.

How still the plains of the waters be! 95
The tide is in his ecstasy.
The tide is at his highest height:
And it is night.

And now from the Vast of the Lord will the waters of sleep
Roll in on the souls of men, 100

But who will reveal to our waking ken
The forms that swim and the shapes that creep
Under the waters of sleep?

And I would I could know what swimmeth below when the tide comes in
On the length and the breadth of the marvelous Marshes of Glynn.

(1879)

*EUGENE FIELD (1850-1895)

LITTLE BOY BLUE

The little toy dog is covered with dust,
But sturdy and stanch he stands;
And the little toy soldier is red with rust,
And his musket molds in his hands.
Time was when the little toy dog was new,
And the soldier was passing fair; 6

And that was the time when our Little Boy Blue
Kissed them and put them there.

"Now, don't you go till I come," he said,
"And don't you make any noise!" 10
So, toddling off to his trundle-bed,
He dreamt of the pretty toys;
And, as he was dreaming, an angel song
Awakened our Little Boy Blue—
Oh! the years are many, the years are long,
But the little toy friends are true! 16

Aye, faithful to Little Boy Blue they stand,
Each in the same old place,
Awaiting the touch of a little hand,
The smile of a little face; 20
And they wonder, as waiting the long years through
In the dust of that little chair,
What has become of our Little Boy Blue,
Since he kissed them and put them there.

(1889)

*Born in St. Louis, Missouri, Field spent his life in the Middle West, and wrote frequently for a Chicago newspaper in which he ran a column. He is remembered chiefly as the tender poet of American childhood.

TWENTIETH CENTURY

NOTE

The new movement in American poetry started after 1900, always excepting its originator, Whitman. The general tendency has been to abandon literary tradition as a confining element in favor of complete freedom of poetic expression. Whitman enabled subsequent poets to perceive the underlying unity of American life, and there is a sense of understanding and comradeship between them all which makes for breadth and strength. Amy Lowell was the spokesman for the group, and her lectures and critical articles did much to make the public understand the movement, and to give the poets a deeper appreciation of that for which they are striving. It would be a mistake to imagine that this movement is primitive, for many of the poets spend much of their time in Europe and are intimately acquainted with contemporary European literature and are sympathetic with its forms and aims. But in contemplating the movement and the individual poets connected with it we perceive chiefly that whether the form of expression be classical or free verse, whether its matter deals with New England, the South, or the West, there is a fundamental, underlying unity and understanding of America as a whole with its titanic life and multifarious outlets of emotional expression from forest, farm, industry, and city. The following selections do not represent all the notable poets in the modern American literary movement. The purpose is to give an adequate idea of the sweep and direction of the movement, and not to present a complete anthology.

*EDWIN MARKHAM (1852-)

THE MAN WITH THE HOE

WRITTEN AFTER SEEING MILLET'S WORLD-FAMOUS PAINTING OF A BRUTALIZED TOILER

God made man in his own image, in the image of God made He him.—Genesis.

Bowed by the weight of centuries he leans
Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,
The emptiness of ages in his face,
And on his back the burden of the world.
Who made him dead to rapture and despair, 5
A thing that grieves not and that never hopes,

*Edwin Markham is a westerner from Oregon, who was principal of The Observation School of the State University in Oakland, California. While there he became a lecturer, writer, and poet, interesting himself always in social and labor questions, especially child labor. His verse is virile and primal. Besides a volume entitled *The Man with the Hoe*, he has written others entitled *Lincoln and Other Poems*, and *The Shoes of Happiness*.

The Man with the Hoe. Cf. "Resolution and Independence" (page 457).

Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox?
Who loosened and let down this brutal jaw?
Whose was the hand that slanted back this brow?
Whose breath blew out the light within this brain? 10

Is this the Thing the Lord God made and gave
To have dominion over sea and land;
To trace the stars and search the heavens for power;
To feel the passion of Eternity?
Is this a dream He dreamed who shaped the suns 15
And markt their ways upon the ancient deep?
Down all the caverns of Hell to their last gulf
There is no shape more terrible than this—
More tongued with censure of the world's blind greed—
More filled with signs and portents for the soul— 20
More packt with danger to the universe.

What gulfs between him and the seraphim!
Slave of the wheel of labor, what to him
Are Plato and the swing of Pleiades?
What the long reaches of the peaks of song, 25
The rift of dawn, the reddening of the rose?
Through this dread shape the suffering ages look;
Time's tragedy is in that aching stoop;
Through this dread shape humanity betrayed,
Plundered, profaned, and disinherited, 30
Cries protest to the Judges of the World,
A protest that is also prophecy.

O masters, lords, and rulers in all lands,
Is this the handiwork you give to God,
This monstrous thing distorted and soul-quencht? 35
How will you ever straighten up this shape;
Touch it again with immortality;
Give back the upward looking and the light;
Rebuild in it the music and the dream;
Make right the immemorial infamies, 40
Perfidious wrongs, immedicable woes?

O masters, lords, and rulers in all lands,
How will the future reckon with this Man?
How answer his brute question in that hour
When whirlwinds of rebellion shake all shores? 45
How will it be with kingdoms and with kings—
With those who shaped him to the thing he is—
When this dumb Terror shall rise to judge the world,
After the silence of the centuries?

(1899)

LINCOLN, THE MAN OF THE PEOPLE

When the Norn Mother saw the Whirlwind Hour
Greatening and darkening as it hurried on,
She left the heaven of Heroes and came down
To make a man to meet the mortal need.
She took the tried clay of the common road— 5
Clay warm yet with the genial heat of Earth,
Dasht through it all a strain of prophecy;
Tempered the heap with thrill of human tears;
Then mixt a laughter with the serious stuff.
Into the shape she breathed a flame to light 10
That tender, tragic, ever-changing face;
And laid on him a sense of the Mystic Powers,
Moving—all husht—behind the mortal veil.

Lincoln, the Man of the People. Cf. "The Happy Warrior" (page 463). 1. **Norn Mother.** The Norns are the Scandinavian Fates. Originally there was only one Norn.

Here was a man to hold against the world,
A man to match the mountains and the sea. 15

The color of the ground was in him, the red earth;
The smack and tang of elemental things;
The rectitude and patience of the cliff;
The good-will of the rain that loves all leaves;
The friendly welcome of the wayside well; 20
The courage of the bird that dares the sea;
The gladness of the wind that shakes the corn;
The pity of the snow that hides all scars;
The secrecy of streams that make their way
Under the mountain to the rifted rock; 25
The tolerance and equity of light
That gives as freely to the shrinking flower
As to the great oak flaring to the wind—
To the grave's low hill as to the Matterhorn
That shoulders out the sky. Sprung from the West, 30
He drank the valorous youth of a new world.
The strength of virgin forests braced his mind,
The hush of spacious prairies stilled his soul.
His words were oaks in acorns; and his thoughts
Were roots that firmly gript the granite truth. 35

Up from log cabin to the Capitol,
One fire was on his spirit, one resolve—
To send the keen ax to the root of wrong,
Clearing a free way for the feet of God,
The eyes of conscience testing every stroke, 40
To make his deed the measure of a man.
He built the rail-pile as he built the State,
Pouring his splendid strength through every blow:
The grip that swung the ax in Illinois
Was on the pen that set a people free. 45

So came the Captain with the mighty heart;
And when the judgment thunders split the house,
Wrenching the rafters from their ancient rest,
He held the ridgepole up, and spikt again
The rafters of the Home. He held his place— 50
Held the long purpose like a growing tree—
Held on through blame and faltered not at praise.
And when he fell in whirlwind, he went down
As when a lordly cedar, green with boughs,
Goes down with a great shout upon the hills, 55
And leaves a lonesome place against the sky. (1900)

*WILLIAM VAUGHN MOODY
(1869-1910)

PANDORA'S SONG

FROM THE FIRE-BRINGER

Of wounds and sore defeat
I made my battle stay;
Wingéd sandals for my feet
I wove of my delay;
Of weariness and fear, 5
I made my shouting spear;
Of loss, and doubt, and dread,
And swift oncoming doom,

*Moody was somewhat apart by temperament from the modern movement which we are recording. He was born in Indiana, graduated from Harvard, and pursued advanced work there in classical and medieval literature. In order to support himself he became a teacher, but his chief interest was in creative literary work. His poetic dramas have not been acted, but in 1905 *The Great Divide*, a drama of contemporary life, was successful on the stage and enabled Moody to become independent. He finally gave up teaching and was preparing for the creation of a long and perhaps epic poem when he died. He had the best literary background of any contemporary American poet, not excepting Amy Lowell, and his premature death was a literary calamity. His poems and plays have been issued in a collected edition. Moody develops the spirit of revolt, but through classical subjects and style rather than ultra modern ones.

Pandora's Song. When Prometheus despairs of the future, Pandora, who has let all the gifts of the gods for mankind escape except hope, comforts him with this song, which many believe to be one of the finest lyrics in American literature. Cf. "Invictus" (page 600), "Reveille" (page 703), and "The Breaking" (page 705).

I made a helmet for my head
And a floating plume. 10
From the shutting mist of death,
From the failure of the breath,
I made a battle-horn to blow
Across the vales of overthrow.
O hearken, love, the battle-horn! 15
The triumph clear, the silver scorn!
O hearken where the echoes bring,
Down the gray, disastrous morn,
Laughter and rallying! (1904)

THE DEATH OF EVE

I

At dawn they came to the stream Hiddekel,
Old Eve and her red first-born, who was now
Grayer than she, and bowed with more than years.
Then Cain beneath his level palm looked hard
Across the desert, and turned with outspread hand 5
As one who says, "Thou seest; we are fooled."
But Eve, with clutching fingers on his arm,
And pointing eastward where the risen sun
Made a low mist of light, said, "It is there!"

II

For, many, many months, in the great tent 10
Of Enoch, Eve had pined, and dared not tell
Her longing—not to Irad, Enoch's son,
Masterful like his father, who had held
Harsh rule, and named the tent-place with his name;
Not to mild Seth, given her in Abel's stead; 15
Not unto angry Lamech, nor his wives,
Usurpers of her honor in the house;
Not to young Jubal, songs-man of the tribe,
Who touched his harp at twilight by her door;
And not to bedrid Adam, most of all, 20
Not unto Adam. Yet at last, the spring
Being at end, and evening with warm stars
Falling upon them by the camel kraal,
Weary with long desire, she spoke to Seth, 24
Touching her meaning faintly and far off
To try him. With still scrutiny awhile
He looked at her; then, lifting doubtful hands
Of prayer, he led her homeward to the tent,
With tremulous speech of small and weekday things. 29
Next, as she lay by Adam before dawn,
His big and wasted hand groping for hers
Suddenly made her half-awakened heart
Break back and back across the shadowy years
To Eden, and God calling in the dew,
And all that song of Paradise foredone 35
Which Jubal made in secret, fearing her
The storied mother; but in secret, too,
Herself had listened, while the maids at toil
Or by the well at evening sang of her
Untruthful things, which, when she once had heard, 40
Seemed truthful. Now, bowed upon Adam's breast,
In the deep hush that comes before the dawn,
She whispered hints and fragments of her will;
And when the shaggy forehead made no sign,
And the blind face searched still as quietly 45
In the tent-roof for what, these many months,
It seemed to seek for there, she held him close
And poured her whole wild meaning in his ear.
But as a man upon his deathbed dreams
That he should know a matter, and knows it not, 50
Nor who they are who fain would have him know,

The Death of Eve. In this poem Moody voices the spirit of revolt in his own way. Instead of taking a contemporary subject he turns to the past, as he did in "The Fire-Bringer," which is based upon the Prometheus myth. To understand the spirit of this poem and its allusions, the Biblical account (Genesis i-iv) should be read first. 2. **red first-born.** Cain was a murderer.

He turned to hers his dim, disastrous eyes,
Wherein the knowledge of her and the long love
Glimmered through veil on veil of vacancy.
That evening little Jubal, coming home
Singing behind his flock, saw ancient Eve 56
Crouched by the ruined altar in the glade,
The accurséd place, sown deep each early spring
With stones and salt—the Valley of the Blood;
And that same night Eve fled under the stars 60
Eastward to Nod, the land of violence,
To Cain and the strong city he had built
Against all men who hunted for his soul.

III

She gave her message darkly in the gates,
And waited trembling. At day-fall he came. 65
She knew him not beneath his whitened hair;
But when at length she knew him, and was known,
The whitened hair, the bent and listening frame,
The savage misery of the sidelong eyes,
Fell on her heart with strangling. So it was 70
That now for many days she held her peace,
Abiding with him till he seemed again
The babe she bare first in the wilderness,
Her maiden fruits to Adam, the new joy
The desert bloomed with, which the desert stars 75
Whispered concerning. Yet she held her peace,
Until he seemed a young man in the house,
A gold frontlet of pride and a green cedar;
Then, leading him apart, Eve told her wish,
Not faltering now nor uttering it far off, 80
But as a sovereign mother to her son
Speaks simple destiny. He looked at her
Dimly, as if he saw her not; then stooped,
Sharpening his brows upon her. With a cry
She laid fierce, shaken hands about his breast, 85
Drew down his neck, and harshly from his brow
Pushing the head-band and the matted locks,
Baring the livid flesh with violence,
She kissed him on the Sign. Cain bowed his head 89
Upon her shoulder, saying, "I will go!"

IV

Now they had come to the stream Hiddekel,
And passed beyond the stream. There, full in face,
Where the low morning made a mist of light,
The Garden and its gates lay like a flower
Afloat on the still waters of the dawn. 95
The clicking leap of bright-mailed grasshoppers,
The dropping of sage-beetles from their perch
On the gnawed cactus, even the pulsing drum
Of blood-beats in their ears, merged suddenly 99
Into ethereal hush. Then Cain made halt,
Held her, and muttered, "'Tis enough. Thou sawest!
His Angel stood and threatened in the sun!"
And Eve said, "Yea, and though the day were set
With sworded angels, thou would'st wait for me
Yonder, before the gates; which, look you, child, 105
Lie open to me as the gates to him,
Thy father, when he entered in his rage,
Calling thee from the dark, where of old days
I kept thee folded, hidden, till he called."
So gray Cain by the unguarded portal sat, 110
His arms crossed o'er his forehead, and his face
Hid in his meager knees; but ancient Eve
Passed on into the vales of Paradise.

V

Trancéd in lonely radiance stood the Tree,
As Eve put back the glimmering ferns and vines 115
And crept into the place. Awhile she stooped,
And as a wild thing by the drinking-pool
Peers ere it drinks, she peered. Then, laughing low,
Her frame of grief and body of her years
She lifted proudly to its virgin height,
Flung her lean arms into the pouring day, 121
And circling with slow paces round the Tree,
She sang her stifled meaning out to God.

EVE'S SONG

Behold, against thy will, against thy word,
Against the wrath and warning of thy sword, 125
Eve has been Eve, O Lord!
A pitcher filled, she comes back from the brook,
A wain she comes, laden with mellow ears;
She is a roll inscribed, a prophet's book
Writ strong with characters. 130
Behold, Eve willed it so; look, if it be so, look!

Early at dawn, while yet thy watchers slept,
Lightly her untamed spirit overleapt
The walls where she was kept.
As a young comely leopardess she stood.
Her lustrous fell, her sullen grace, her fleetness— 136
They gave her foretaste, in thy tangled wood,
Of many a savage sweetness,
Good to fore-gloat upon; being tasted, sweet and good.

O swayer in the sunlit tops of trees, 140
O comer up with cloud out of the seas,
O laugher at thine ease
Over thine everlasting dream of mirth,
O lord of savage pleasures, savage pains,
Knew'st Thou not Eve, who broughtest her to birth? 145

136. **fell**, coat.

Searcher of breast and reins,
Thou should'st have searched thy Woman, the seed pod of thine earth!

Herself hath searched her softly through and through;
Singing she lifts her full soul up to view;
Lord, do thou praise it, too! 150
Look, as she turns it, how it dartles free
Its gathered meanings: woman, mother, wife,
Spirit that was and is and waits to be,
Worm of the dust of life,
Child, sister—ghostly rays! What lights are these, Lord, see! 155

Look where Eve lifts her storied soul on high,
And turns it as a ball, she knows not why,
Save that she could not die
Till she had shown Thee all the secret sphere—
The bright rays and the dim, and these that run 160
Bright-darkling, making thee to doubt and fear—
Oh, love them every one!
Eve pardons thee not one, not one, Lord; dost thou hear?
Lovely to Eve was Adam's praising breath;
His face averted bitter was as death; 165
Abel, her son, and Seth
Lifted her heart to heaven, praising her;
Cain with a little frown darkened the stars;
And when the strings of Jubal's harp would stir,
Like honey in cool jars 170
The words he praised her with, like rain his praises were.

Still, still with prayer and ecstasy she strove
To be the woman they did well approve,
That, narrowed to their love,
She might have done with bitterness and blame; 175
But still along the yonder edge of prayer
A spirit in a fiery whirlwind came—
Eve's spirit, wild and fair—
Crying with Eve's own voice the number of her name.

146. **reins**, intestines or vitals.

Yea, turning in the whirlwind and the fire, 180
Eve saw her own proud being all entire
Made perfect by desire;
And from the rounded gladness of that sphere
Came bridal songs and harpings and fresh laughter;
"Glory unto the faithful!" sounded clear,
And then, a little after, 186
"Whoso denieth aught, let him depart from here!"

Now, therefore, Eve, with mystic years o'er-scored,
Danceth and doeth pleasure to thee, Lord,
According to the word 190
That thou hast spoken to her by her dream.
Singing a song she dimly understands,
She lifts her soul to let the splendor stream.
Lord, take away thy hands!
Let this beam pierce thy heart, and this most piercing beam! 195

Far off rebelliously, yet for thy sake,
She gathered them, O thou who lovest to break
A thousand souls, and shake
Their dust along the wind, but sleeplessly
Searchest the Bride fulfilled in limb and feature, 200
Ready and boon to be fulfilled of thee,
Thine ample, tameless creature—
Against thy will and word, behold, Lord, this is She!

VI

From carven plinth and thousand-galleried green
Cedars, and all close boughs that over-tower, 205
The shadows lengthened eastward from the gates,
And still Cain hid his forehead in his knees,
Nor dared to look abroad, lest he might find
More watchers in the portals; for he heard
What seemed the rush of wings; from while to while 210
A pallor grew and faded in his brain,
As if a great light passed him near at hand.
But when above the darkening desert swales
The moon came, shedding white, unlikely day,
Cain rose, and with his back against the stones, 215
As a keen fighter at the desperate odds,
Glared round him. Cool and silent lay the night,
Empty of any foe. Then, as a man
Who has a thing to do, and makes his fear
An icy wind to freeze his purpose firm,
He stole in through the pillars of the gate, 221
Down aisles of shadow windowed with the moon,
By meads with the still stars communicant,
Past heaven-bosoming pool and pooléd stream,
Until he saw, through tangled fern and vine, 225
The Tree, where God had made its habitation.
And crouched above the shape that had been Eve,
With savage, listening frame and side-long eyes,
Cain waited for the coming of the dawn.

(1906)

201. **boon**, glad.

*EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON
(1869-)

†THE MASTER

LINCOLN AS HE APPEARED TO ONE SOON AFTER THE CIVIL WAR

A flying word from here and there
Had sown the name at which we sneered,
But soon the name was everywhere,
To be reviled and then revered—
A presence to be loved and feared, 5

*Robinson is recognized as one of the foremost American poets. He was born in Maine and lives there still. The poetry of Robinson is smooth in technique, but his subjects have become increasingly pyschological and introspective, until the meaning requires much pondering. His use of irony is similar to that of Hardy, but is not so clearly expressed. *The Town down the River*, and *The Man against the Sky* are two of his significant books of short poems. *Roman Barthalow* is his most recent long narrative poem.

†From *Collected Poems*, 1921, by permission of The Macmillan Company.

We cannot hide it, or deny
That we, the gentlemen who jeered,
May be forgotten by and by.

He came when days were perilous
And hearts of men were sore beguiled;
And having made his note of us, 11
He pondered and was reconciled.
Was ever master yet so mild
As he, and so untamable?
We doubted, even when he smiled, 15
Not knowing what he knew so well.

He knew that undeceiving fate
Would shame us whom he served unsought;
He knew that he must wince and wait—
The jest of those for whom he fought; 20
He knew devoutly what he thought
Of us and of our ridicule;
He knew that we must all be taught
Like little children in a school.

We gave a glamour to the task 25
That he encountered and saw through;
But little of us did he ask,
And little did we ever do.
And what appears if we review
The season when we railed and chaffed?—
It is the face of one who knew 31
That we were learning while we laughed.

The face that in our vision feels
Again the venom that we flung,
Transfigured, to the world reveals 35
The vigilance to which we clung.
Shrewd, hallowed, harassed, and among
The mysteries that are untold—
The face we see was never young,
Nor could it wholly have been old. 40

For he, to whom we had applied
Our shopman's test of age and worth,
Was elemental when he died,
As he was ancient at his birth.
The saddest among kings of earth, 45
Bowed with a galling crown, this man
Met rancor with a cryptic mirth,
Laconic—and Olympian.

The love, the grandeur, and the fame
Are bounded by the world alone; 50
The calm, the smoldering, and the flame
Of awful patience were his own;
With him they are forever flown
Past all our fond self-shadowings,
Wherewith we cumber the Unknown 55
As with inept, Icarian wings.

For we were not as other men;
'Twas ours to soar and his to see.
But we are coming down again,
And we shall come down pleasantly; 60
Nor shall we longer disagree
On what it is to be sublime,
But flourish in our perigee
And have one Titan at a time. (1910)

*THE GIFT OF GOD

Blessed with a joy that only she
Of all alive shall ever know,
She wears a proud humility
For what it was that willed it so—
That her degree should be so great 5
Among the favored of the Lord
That she may scarcely bear the weight
Of her bewildering reward.

As one apart, immune, alone,
Or featured for the shining ones, 10
And like to none that she has known
Of other women's other sons—
The firm fruition of her need,
He shines anointed; and he blurs
Her vision, till it seems indeed 15
A sacrilege to call him hers.

She fears a little for so much
Of what is best, and hardly dares
To think of him as one to touch
With aches, indignities, and cares; 20
She sees him rather at the goal,
Still shining; and her dream foretells
The proper shining of a soul
Where nothing ordinary dwells.

Perchance a canvass of the town 25
Would find him far from flags and shouts,
And leave him only the renown
Of many smiles and many doubts;
Perchance the crude and common tongue
Would havoc strangely with his worth;

56. **Icarian.** Icarus, son of Daedalus, is fabled to have escaped from Crete on wings invented by his father. The boy flew too near the sun, his wings melted, and he was drowned in the sea. 63. **perigee,** that point of the moon's orbit which is nearest the earth. 64. **Titan,** a demi-god, like the Greek Prometheus.

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The Gift of God. A subtle analysis of a mother's idealization of her son.

But she, with innocence unwrung, 31
Would read his name around the earth.

And others, knowing how this youth
Would shine, if love could make him great,
When caught and tortured for the truth
Would only writhe and hesitate; 36
While she, arranging for his days
What centuries could not fulfill,
Transmutes him with her faith and praise,
And has him shining where she will. 40

She crowns him with her gratefulness,
And says again that life is good;
And should the gift of God be less
In him than in her motherhood,
His fame, though vague, will not be small, 45
As upward through her dream he fares,
Half clouded with a crimson fall
Of roses thrown on marble stairs.

(1916)

*CASSANDRA

I heard one who said: "Verily,
What word have I for children here?
Your Dollar is your only Word,
The wrath of it your only fear.

"You build it altars tall enough 5
To make you see, but you are blind;
You cannot leave it long enough
To look before you or behind.

"When Reason beckons you to pause,
You laugh and say that you know best; 10
But what it is you know, you keep
As dark as ingots in a chest.

"You laugh and answer, 'We are young;
Oh, leave us now, and let us grow,'
Not asking how much more of this 15
Will Time endure or Fate bestow.

"Because a few complacent years
Have made your peril of your pride,
Think you that you are to go on
Forever pampered and untried? 20

What lost eclipse of history,
What bivouac of the marching stars
Has given the sign for you to see
Millenniums and last great wars?

"What unrecorded overthrow 25
Of all the world has ever known,
Or ever been, has made itself
So plain to you, and you alone?

"Your Dollar, Dove, and Eagle make
A Trinity that even you 30
Rate higher than you rate yourselves;
It pays, it flatters, and it's new.

"And though your very flesh and blood
Be what your Eagle eats and drinks,
You'll praise him for the best of birds,
Not knowing what the Eagle thinks.

"The power is yours, but not the sight;
You see not upon what you tread;
You have the ages for your guide,
But not the wisdom to be led. 40

"Think you to tread forever down
The merciless old verities?
And are you never to have eyes
To see the world for what it is?

"Are you to pay for what you have 45
With all you are?"—No other word
We caught, but with a laughing crowd
Moved on. None heeded, and few heard.

(1916)

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Cassandra. A poem of subtle irony. Cassandra was a daughter of Priam whom Apollo loved in vain. He gave her the gift of prophecy, with the curse that no one should believe her. Robinson here dodges direct speech by "I heard one who said."

*THOMAS AUGUSTINE DALY
(1871-)

MIA CARLOTTA

Giuseppe, da barber, ees greata for "mash,"
He gotta da bigga, da blacka moustache,
Good clo'es an' good styla an' playnta good cash.

*A New York journalist, whose excellent dialect verses have won him great popularity. The first two poems contrast Italian humor and pathos. The immigrant appears frequently in American twentieth-century literature. Among the volumes Daly has published are *McAroni Ballads*, *Carmina*, *Canzoni*, and *Songs of Wedlock*.

W'enevra Giuseppe ees walk on da street,
Da peopla dey talka, "how nobby! how neat!
How softa da handa, how smalla da feet."

He leefta hees hat an' he shaka hees curls,
An' smila weeth teetha so shiny like pearls;
Oh, manny da heart of da seelly young girls
He gotta.
Yes, playnta he gotta—
But notta
Carlotta!

Giuseppe, da barber, he maka da eye,
An' like da steam engine puffa an' sigh,
For catcha Carlotta w'en she ees go by.

Carlotta she walka weeth nose in da air,
An' look through Giuseppe weeth far-away stare,
As eef she no see dere ees som'body dere.

Giuseppe, da barber, he gotta da cash,
He gotta da clo'es an' da bigga moustache,
He gotta da seelly young girls for da "mash,"

But notta—
You bat my life, notta—
Carlotta.
I gotta!

(1906)

DA LEETLA BOY

Da spreeng ees com'! but O, da joy
Eet ees too late!
He was so cold, my leetla boy,
He no could wait.

I no can count how manny week,
How manny day, dat he ees seeck;
How manny night I seet an' hold
Da leetla han dat was so cold.
He was so patience, oh, so sweet!
Eet hurts my throat for theenk of eet;
An' all he evra ask ees w'en
Ees gona com' da spreeng agen.
Wan day, wan brighta sunny day,
He see, across da alleyway,
Da leetla girl dat's livin' dere
Ees raise her window for da air,
An' put outside a leetla pot
Of—w'at-you-call?—forgat-me-not.
So smalla flower, so leetla theeng!
But steel eet mak' hees hearta seeng:
"Oh, now, at las', ees com' da spreeng!
Da leetla plant ees glad for know
Da sun ees com' for mak' eet grow.
So, too, I am grow warm and strong."
So lika dat he seeng hees song.
But, ah! da night com' down an' den
Da weenter ees sneak back agen,
An' een da alley all da night
Ees fall da snow, so cold, so white,
An' cover up da leetla pot
Of—wa't-you-call?—forgat-me-not.
All night da leetla hand I hold
Ees grow so cold, so cold, so cold!

Da spreeng ees com'; but O, da joy
Eet ees too late!
He was so cold, my leetla boy,
He no could wait.

(1906)

THE JOURNEY'S END

Good-by, dear heart. Be thou, as I am, glad,
Glad for the grace of loneliness and yearning
My heart, far faring from thee, shall have had
Ere its returning.
Pluck future joy from out this present pain;
Rejoice to know that these small seeds of sorrow
Shall be Love's harvest when we meet again,
Some bright tomorrow.

(1906)

*ROBERT FROST (1875-)

TO THE THAWING WIND

Come with rain, O loud Southwester!
Bring the singer, bring the nester;
Give the buried flower a dream;
Make the settled snow-bank steam;
Find the brown beneath the white; 5
But whate'er you do tonight,
Bathe my window, make it flow,
Melt it as the ices go;
Melt the glass and leave the sticks
Like a hermit's crucifix; 10
Burst into my narrow stall;
Swing the picture on the wall;
Run the rattling pages o'er;
Scatter poems on the floor;
Turn the poet out of door. (1913)

THE PASTURE

I'm going out to clean the pasture spring;
I'll only stop to rake the leaves away
(And wait to watch the water clear, I may);
I sha'n't be gone long.—You come too.

I'm going out to fetch the little calf 5
That's standing by the mother. It's so young,
It totters when she licks it with her tongue.
I sha'n't be gone long.—You come too. (1914)

MENDING WALL

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That sends the frozen ground-swell under it,
And spills the upper boulders in the sun;
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.
The work of hunters is another thing: 5
I have come after them and made repair
Where they have left not one stone on stone,
But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,
To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean;
No one has seen them made or heard them made, 10
But at spring mending-time we find them there.
I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;
And on a day we meet to walk the line
And set the wall between us once again.
We keep the wall between us as we go.
To each the boulders that have fallen to each. 16
And some are loaves and some so nearly balls
We have to use a spell to make them balance:
"Stay where you are until our backs are turned!"
We wear our fingers rough with handling them. 20
Oh, just another kind of out-door game,
One on a side. It comes to little more.
There where it is we do not need the wall:
He is all pine and I am apple orchard.
My apple trees will never get across 25
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.
He only says, "Good fences make good neighbors."
Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
If I could put a notion in his head:
"Why do they make good neighbors? Isn't it 30
Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.
Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offense.
Something there is that doesn't love a wall, 35
That wants it down." I could say "Elves" to him,

*Although born in the West, Robert Frost's ancestors came from New England, and thither the young man returned to see its significance with new eyes. With the exception of serving as fellow of creative literature at the University of Michigan, he has spent his life in the East and has been professor of English at Amherst. In his books—*A Boy's Will, North of Boston, Mountain Interval,* and *New Hampshire*—Frost writes of New England as it is, with deep insight and appreciation.

To the Thawing Wind. Contrast the purpose and treatment of this poem with those of Shelley in the "Ode to the West Wind" (page 489) and Masefield in "The West Wind" (page 623).

The Pasture. Cf. "The Lamb" (page 433).

Mending Wall. Cf. "Resolution and Independence" (page 457).

But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather
He said it for himself. I see him there
Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top
In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed. 40
He moves in darkness as it seems to me,
Not of woods only and the shade of trees.
He will not go behind his father's saying,
And he likes having thought of it so well
He says again, "Good fences make good neighbors." (1914)

AFTER APPLE-PICKING

My long two-pointed ladder's sticking through a tree
Toward heaven still,
And there's a barrel that I didn't fill
Beside it, and there may be two or three
Apples I didn't pick upon some bough. 5
But I am done with apple-picking now.
Essence of winter sleep is on the night,
The scent of apples; I am drowsing off.
I cannot rub the strangeness from my sight
I got from looking through a pane of glass 10
I skimmed this morning from the drinking trough
And held against the world of hoary grass.
It melted, and I let it fall and break.
But I was well
Upon my way to sleep before it fell, 15
And I could tell
What form my dreaming was about to take.
Magnified apples appear and disappear,
Stem end and blossom end. 19
And every fleck of russet showing clear.
My instep arch not only keeps the ache,
It keeps the pressure of a ladder-round.
I feel the ladder sway as the boughs bend.
And I keep hearing from the cellar bin
The rumbling sound 25
Of load on load of apples coming in.
For I have had too much
Of apple-picking; I am overtired
Of the great harvest I myself desired.
There were ten thousand thousand fruit to touch, 30
Cherish in hand, lift down, and not let fall.
For all
That struck the earth,
No matter if not bruised or spiked with stubble,
Went surely to the cider-apple heap 35
As of no worth.
One can see what will trouble
This sleep of mine, whatever sleep it is.
Were he not gone,
The woodchuck could say whether it's like his 40
Long sleep, as I describe its coming on,
Or just some human sleep. (1914)

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth; 5

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay 11
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back. 15

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.
(1916)

The Road Not Taken. Cf. "A Broken Song" (page 629).

BIRCHES

When I see birches bend to left and right
Across the lines of straighter darker trees,
I like to think some boy's been swinging them.
But swinging doesn't bend them down to stay.
Ice-storms do that. Often you must have seen them 5
Loaded with ice a sunny winter morning
After a rain. They click upon themselves
As the breeze rises, and turn many-colored
As the stir cracks and crazes their enamel.
Soon the sun's warmth makes them shed crystal shells, 10
Shattering and avalanching on the snow-crust—
Such heaps of broken glass to sweep away
You'd think the inner dome of heaven had fallen.
They are dragged to the withered bracken by the load,
And they seem not to break; though once they are bowed 15
So low for long, they never right themselves.
You may see their trunks arching in the woods
Years afterwards, trailing their leaves on the ground
Like girls on hands and knees that throw their hair
Before them over their heads to dry in the sun. 20
But I was going to say when Truth broke in
With all her matter-of-fact about the ice-storm
(Now am I free to be poetical?)
I should prefer to have some boy bend them
As he went out and in to fetch the cows— 25
Some boy too far from town to learn baseball,
Whose only play was what he found himself,
Summer or winter, and could play alone.
One by one he subdued his father's trees
By riding them down over and over again 30
Until he took the stiffness out of them,
And not one but hung limp, not one was left
For him to conquer. He learned all there was
To learn about not launching out too soon
And so not carrying the tree away 35
Clear to the ground. He always kept his poise
To the top branches, climbing carefully
With the same pains you use to fill a cup
Up to the brim, and even above the brim
Then he flung outward, feet first, with a swish, 40
Kicking his way down through the air to the ground.
So was I once myself a swinger of birches.
And so I dream of going back to be.
It's when I'm weary of considerations,
And life is too much like a pathless wood 45
Where your face burns and tickles with the cobwebs
Broken across it, and one eye is weeping
From a twig's having lashed across it open.
I'd like to get away from earth awhile
And then come back to it and begin over. 50
May no fate willfully misunderstand me
And half grant what I wish and snatch me away
Not to return. Earth's the right place for love;
I don't know where it's likely to go better.
I'd like to go by climbing a birch tree, 55
And climb black branches up a snow-white trunk
Toward heaven, till the tree could bear no more,
But dipped its top and set me down again.
That would be good both going and coming back.
One could do worse than be a swinger of birches. (1916)

Birches. Cf. "There Was a Boy" (page 454) and "Influence of Natural Objects" (page 455).

*VACHEL LINDSAY (1879-1932)

†GENERAL WILLIAM BOOTH ENTERS INTO HEAVEN

To be sung to the tune of THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB *with indicated instruments.*

I

[*Bass drum beaten loudly*]
Booth led boldly with his big bass drum,
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?
The saints smiled gravely, and they said,
"He's come."
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb? 5
Walking lepers followed, rank on rank,
Lurching bravos from the ditches dank,
Drabs from the alleyways and drug-fiends pale—
Minds still passion-ridden, soul-powers frail!
[*Banjos*]
Vermin-eaten saints with moldy breath
Unwashed legions with the ways of death— 11
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

Every slum had sent its half-a-score
The round world over—Booth had groaned for more.
Every banner that the wide world flies
Bloomed with glory and transcendent dyes. 16
Big-voiced lasses made their banjos bang!
Tranced, fanatical, they shrieked and sang,
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?
Hallelujah! It was queer to see 20
Bull-necked convicts with that land make free!
Loons with bazoos blowing blare, blare, blare—
On, on, upward through the golden air.
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

II

[*Bass drum slower and softer*]
Booth died blind, and still by faith he trod, 25
Eyes still dazzled by the ways of God.
Booth led boldly and he looked the chief:
Eagle countenance in sharp relief,
Beard a-flying, air of high command
Unabated in that holy land. 30
[*Sweet flute music*]
Jesus came from out the Courthouse door,
Stretched his hands above the passing poor.
Booth saw not, but led his queer ones there
Round and round the mighty Court-house square.
Yet in an instant all that blear review
Marched on spotless, clad in raiment new. 36
The lame were straightened, withered limbs uncurled,
And blind eyes opened on a new sweet world.
[*Bass drum louder*]
Drabs and vixens in a flash made whole!
Gone was the weasel-head, the snout, the jowl; 40
Sages and sibyls now, and athletes clean,
Rulers of empires, and of forests green!
[*Grand chorus of all instruments. Tambourines to the foreground*]
The hosts were sandaled and their wings were fire—
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?
But their noise played havoc with the angel-choir. 45
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?
Oh, shout Salvation! it was good to see
Kings and princes by the Lamb set free.
The banjos rattled and the tamborines

*Lindsay was western by both birth and education. He traveled, however, frequently and far from his native Springfield, Illinois, as student and lecturer. In his poetry he emphasized the syncopations of rhythm in order to get a more primitive emotional effect. Not all his work is intentionally primitive, as the second poem included here shows, but Lindsay succeeded in employing successfully many of the devices of ballad poetry. Two of the most representative volumes of Lindsay's poems are *The Congo* and *General William Booth.*

†Reprinted from *Collected Poems*, 1923, by permission of The Macmillan Company.

General William Booth Enters Heaven. William Booth was the organizer and leader of the Salvation Army. He died in 1912.

22. bazoos, mouth-organs.

Jing-jing-jingled in the hands of queens!
[*Reverently sung, no instruments*]
And when Booth halted by the curb for prayer 51
He saw his Master through the flag-filled air.
Christ came gently with a robe and crown
For Booth the soldier while the throng knelt down.
He saw King Jesus—they were face to face, 55
And he knelt a-weeping in that holy place.
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb? (1913)

*ABRAHAM LINCOLN WALKS AT MIDNIGHT

It is portentous, and a thing of state
That here at midnight, in our little town
A mourning figure walks, and will not rest,
Near the old courthouse pacing up and down,

Or by his homestead, or in shadowed yards 5
He lingers where his children used to play,
Or through the market, on the well-worn stones
He stalks until the dawn-stars burn away.

A bronzed, lank man! His suit of ancient black,
A famous high-top hat, and plain worn shawl 10
Make him the quaint great figure that men love,
The prairie lawyer, master of us all.

He cannot sleep upon his hillside now.
He is among us—as in times before!
And we who toss and lie awake for long
Breathe deep, and start, to see him pass the door. 16

His head is bowed. He thinks on men and kings.
Yea, when the sick world cries, how can he sleep?
Too many peasants fight, they know not why,
Too many homesteads in black terror weep. 20

The sins of all the war-lords burn his heart.
He sees the dreadnaughts scouring every main.
He carries on his shawl-wrapped shoulders now
The bitterness, the folly, and the pain.

He cannot rest until a spirit-dawn 25
Shall come—the shining hope of Europe free;
The league of sober folk, the Workers' Earth,
Bringing long peace to Cornland, Alp, and Sea.

It breaks his heart that kings must murder still,
That all his hours of travail here for men
Seem yet in vain. And who will bring white peace 31
That he may sleep upon his hill again? (1914)

*Reprinted from *Collected Poems*, 1923, by permission of The Macmillan Company.

*CHESTER FIRKINS (1882-1915)

ON A SUBWAY EXPRESS

I, who have lost the stars, the sod,
For chilling pave and cheerless light,
Have made my meeting-place with God
A new and nether Night—

Have found a fane where thunder fills 5
Loud caverns, tremulous—and these
Atone me for my reverend hills
And moonlit silences.

A figment in the crowded dark,
Where men sit muted by the roar, 10
I ride upon the whirring Spark
Beneath the city's floor.

*A young western literary man of promise who was born in Minneapolis in 1882, came to New York to pursue his career, and died there in 1915.

On a Subway Express. A new phase of religious expression. Contrast with it such hymns as Addison's (page 412), Whittier's (page 645), or Holmes's (page 643).

In this dim firmament the stars
Whirl by in blazing files and tiers;
Kin meteors graze our flying bars, 15
Amid the spinning spheres.

Speed! speed! until the quivering rails
Flash silver where the headlight gleams,
As when on lakes the moon impales
The waves upon its beams. 20

Life throbs about me, yet I stand
Outgazing on majestic Power;
Death rides with me, on either hand,
In my communion hour.

You that 'neath country skies can pray, 25
Scoff not at me—the city clod—
My only respite of the day
Is this wild ride—with God.

(1908)

*ALAN SEEGER (1888-1916)

I HAVE A RENDEZVOUS WITH DEATH

I have a rendezvous with Death
At some disputed barricade,
When spring comes back with rustling shade
And apple-blossoms fill the air—
I have a rendezvous with Death 5
When spring brings back blue days and fair.

It may be he shall take my hand
And lead me into his dark land
And close my eyes and quench my breath—
It may be I shall pass him still. 10
I have a rendezvous with Death
On some scarred slope of battered hill
When spring comes round again this year
And the first meadow-flowers appear.

God knows 'twere better to be deep 15
Pillowed in silk and scented down,
Where Love throbs out in blissful sleep,
Pulse nigh to pulse, and breath to breath,
Where hushed awakenings are dear . . .
But I've a rendezvous with Death 20
At midnight in some flaming town,
When spring trips north again this year,
And I to my pledged word am true,
I shall not fail that rendezvous.

(1916)

*A young Harvard graduate who went to Paris in 1912 to study. When the war came he enlisted in the French Foreign Legion, where he served until he was killed in action on July 5, 1916. His poems, which have been published in one volume, are inspired by the highest sense of chivalry and love of beauty. Keats, Brooke, and Seeger have much in common. The beautifully restrained lyric form of "I Have a Rendezvous with Death" is reminiscent of the old songs of France, as is also "In Flanders Fields" (page 617).

*SARA TEASDALE (1884–1933)

†HELEN OF TROY

Wild flight on flight against the fading dawn,
The flames' red wings soar upward duskily.
This is the funeral pyre and Troy is dead
That sparkled so the day I saw it first,
And darkened slowly after. I am she 5
Who loves all beauty—yet I wither it.
Why have the high gods made me wreak their wrath—
Forever since my maidenhood to sow
Sorrow and blood about me? Lo, they keep
Their bitter care above me even now. 10
It was the gods who led me to this lair,
That though the burning winds should make me weak,
They should not snatch the life from out my lips.
Olympus let the other women die; 14
They shall be quiet when the day is done
And have no care tomorrow. Yet for me
There is no rest. The gods are not so kind

*Sara Teasdale (Mrs. Ernst B. Filsinger) is probably the foremost writer of lyric love poetry in America, although Edna St. Vincent Millay is a younger rival. Sara Teasdale has a pure lyric expression which varies from the classic restraint of the Greeks and Romans to the untrammeled independence of free verse. Both types of poetry are represented in the selections here given. The poems which use the city as their background deserve comparison with "Amoris Victima" (page 624) and "Amoris Exsul" (page 625) of Symons, but even more with the sixteenth-century lyric love songs of the Elizabethans. *Helen of Troy, Love Songs, Flame and Shadow*, and *Rivers to the Sea* are volumes which represent her work adequately.

Helen of Troy. Cf. *Deirdre* and the first sonnet of "Menelaus and Helen" (page 620).

†Reprinted from *Helen of Troy*, 1911, by permission of The Macmillan Company.

To her made half immortal like themselves.
It is to you I owe the cruel gift, 19
Leda, my mother, and the Swan, my sire,
To you the beauty and to you the bale;
For never woman born of man and maid
Had wrought such havoc on the earth as I,
Or troubled heaven with a sea of flame
That climbed to touch the silent whirling stars 25
And blotted out their brightness ere the dawn.
Have I not made the world to weep enough?
Give death to me. Yet life is more than death;
How could I leave the sound of singing winds,
The strong sweet scent that breathes from off the sea, 30
Or shut my eyes forever to the spring?
I will not give the grave my hands to hold,
My shining hair to light oblivion.
Have those who wander through the ways of death, 34
The still wan fields Elysian, any love
To lift their breasts with longing, any lips
To thirst against the quiver of a kiss?
Lo, I shall live to conquer Greece again,
To make the people love, who hate me now. 39
My dreams are over, I have ceased to cry
Against the fate that made men love my mouth
And left their spirits all too deaf to hear
The little songs that echoed through my soul.
I have no anger now. The dreams are done;
Yet since the Greeks and Trojans would not see 45
Aught but my body's fairness, till the end,
In all the islands set in all the seas,
And all the lands that lie beneath the sun,
Till light turn darkness, and till time shall sleep,
Men's lives shall waste with longing after me, 50
For I shall be the sum of their desire,
The whole of beauty, never seen again.

20. **Leda.** Zeus wooed Leda in the form of a swan. Helen was their daughter. 21. **bale.** malignant influence.

And they shall stretch their arms and starting, wake
With "Helen!" on their lips, and in their eyes
The vision of me. Always I shall be
Limned on the darkness like a shaft of light 56
That glimmers and is gone. They shall behold
Each one his dream that fashions me anew—
With hair like lakes that glint beneath the stars
Dark as sweet midnight, or with hair aglow 60
Like burnished gold that still retains the fire.
Yea, I shall haunt until the dusk of time
The heavy eyelids filled with fleeting dreams.

I wait for one who comes with sword to slay—
The king I wronged who searches for me now; 65
And yet he shall not slay me. I shall stand
With lifted head and look into his eyes,
Baring my breast to him and to the sun.
He shall not have the power to stain with blood
That whiteness—for the thirsty sword shall fall 70
And he shall cry and catch me in his arms,
Bearing me back to Sparta on his breast.
Lo, I shall live to conquer Greece again!

(1911)

*SPRING NIGHT

The park is filled with night and fog,
The veils are drawn about the world,
The drowsy lights along the paths
Are dim and pearled.

Gold and gleaming the empty streets, 5
Gold and gleaming the misty lake;
The mirrored lights like sunken swords,
Glimmer and shake.
Oh, is it not enough to be

65. **king,** Menelaus, king of Sparta and husband of Helen, whom she forsook for Paris.

*Reprinted from *Rivers to the Sea,* 1915, by permission of The Macmillan Company.

Here with this beauty over me? 10
My throat should ache with praise, and I
Should kneel in joy beneath the sky.
Oh, beauty are you not enough?
Why am I crying after love
With youth, a singing voice and eyes 15
To take earth's wonder with surprise?
Why have I put off my pride,
Why am I unsatisfied,
I for whom the pensive night
Binds her cloudy hair with light, 20
I for whom all beauty burns
Like incense in a million urns?
Oh, beauty, are you not enough?
Why am I crying after love? (1915)

*SUMMER NIGHT, RIVERSIDE

In the wild, soft summer darkness
How many and many a night we two together
Sat in the park and watched the Hudson
Wearing her lights like golden spangles
Glinting on black satin. 5
The rail along the curving pathway
Was low in a happy place to let us cross,
And down the hill a tree that dripped with bloom
Sheltered us,
While your kisses and the flowers, 10
Falling, falling,
Tangled my hair . . .

The frail white stars moved slowly over the sky.

And now, far off
In the fragrant darkness 15
The tree is tremulous again with bloom,
For June comes back.

Tonight what girl
Dreamily before her mirror shakes from her hair
This year's blossoms, clinging in its coils?
(1915)

†WOOD SONG

I heard a wood-thrush in the dusk
Twirl three notes and make a star—
My heart that walked with bitterness
Came back from very far.

Three shining notes were all he had, 5
And yet they made a starry call—
I caught life back against my breast
And kissed it, scars and all. (1915)

*Reprinted from *Rivers to the Sea*, 1915, by permission of The Macmillan Company.

†Reprinted from *Love Songs*, 1905, by permission of The Macmillan Company.

*EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY
(1892-)

†GOD'S WORLD

O world, I cannot hold thee close enough!
Thy winds, thy wide gray skies!
Thy mists, that roll and rise!
Thy woods, this autumn day, that ache and sag
And all but cry with color! That gaunt crag 5
To crush! To lift the lean of that black bluff!
World, world, I cannot get thee close enough!

Long have I known a glory in it all,
But never knew I this;
Here such a passion is 10
As stretcheth me apart. Lord, I do fear
Thou'st made the world too beautiful this year;
My soul is all but out of me—let fall
No burning leaf; prithee, let no bird call.
(1917)

†AFTERNOON ON A HILL

I will be the gladdest thing
Under the sun!
I will touch a hundred flowers
And not pick one.

I will look at cliffs and clouds 5
With quiet eyes,
Watch the wind bow down the grass,
And the grass rise.

And when lights begin to show
Up from the town, 10
I will mark which must be mine,
And then start down! (1917)

*A young poet who lives in New York. Her four fragile volumes are filled with exuberant and passionately emotional verse. Her poetry sweeps the gamut of emotion from delightful humor to the deepest pathos. Recently her poems have been collected in one volume.

†From *Renascence*, published by Harper and Brothers, copyright, 1917, by Edna St. Vincent Millay.

God's World. Cf. "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" (page 462).

*WHEN THE YEAR GROWS OLD

I cannot but remember
When the year grows old—
October—November—
How she disliked the cold!

She used to watch the swallows 5
Go down across the sky,
And turn from the window
With a little sharp sigh.

And often when the brown leaves
Were brittle on the ground, 10
And the wind in the chimney
Made a melancholy sound,

She had a look about her
That I wish I could forget—
The look of a scared thing 15
Sitting in a net!

Oh, beautiful at nightfall
The soft spitting snow!
And beautiful the bare boughs
Rubbing to and fro! 20

But the roaring of the fire,
And the warmth of fur,
And the boiling of the kettle
Were beautiful to her!

I cannot but remember 25
When the year grows old—
October—November—
How she disliked the cold! (1917)

†ANNA HEMPSTEAD BRANCH

SONGS FOR MY MOTHER

[SELECTIONS]

HER HANDS

My mother's hands are cool and fair;
They can do anything.
Delicate mercies hide them there,
Like flowers in the spring.

When I was small and could not sleep, 5
She used to come to me,
And with my cheek upon her hand
How sure my rest would be;

For everything she ever touched
Of beautiful or fine, 10
Their memories living in her hands
Would warm that sleep of mine.

Her hands remember how they played
One time in meadow streams—
And all the flickering song and shade 15
Of water took my dreams.

Swift through her haunted fingers pass
Memories of garden things—
I dipped my face in flowers and grass
And sounds of hidden wings. 20

One time she touched the cloud that kissed
Brown pastures bleak and far—
I leaned my cheek into a mist
And thought I was a star.

All this was very long ago 25
And I am grown; but yet
The hand that lured my slumber so
I never can forget.

For still when drowsiness comes on,
It seems so soft and cool, 30
Shaped happily beneath my cheek,
Hollow and beautiful. (1905)

HER WORDS

My mother has the prettiest tricks
Of words and words and words.
Her talk comes out as smooth and sleek
As breasts of singing birds.

She shapes her speech all silver fine 5
Because she loves it so.
And her own eyes begin to shine
To hear her stories grow.

And if she goes to make a call
Or out to take a walk, 10
We leave our work when she returns
And run to hear her talk.

When the Year Grows Old. A beautiful combination of the elegy with the ballad form. Contrast with "She Hears the Storm" (page 613).

*From *Renascence*, published by Harper and Brothers, copyright, 1917, by Edna St. Vincent Millay.

†A poet of New England whose work is tenderly imaginative, but is always based upon significant observation, as are the poems of Rossetti.

Her Hands. Cf. "On the Receipt of My Mother's Picture" (page 427) and "My Sister's Sleep" (page 586).

We had not dreamed these things were so
Of sorrow and of mirth.
Her speech is as a thousand eyes 15
Through which we see the earth.

God wove a web of loveliness,
Of clouds and stars and birds,
But made not anything at all
So beautiful as words. 20

They shine around our simple earth
With golden shadowings,
And every common thing they touch
Is exquisite with wings.

There's nothing poor and nothing small
But is made fair with them. 26
They are the hands of living faith
That touch the garment's hem.

They are as fair as bloom or air,
They shine like any star, 30
And I am rich who learned from her
How beautiful they are. (1905)

TO A NEW YORK SHOP-GIRL DRESSED FOR SUNDAY

Today I saw the shop-girl go
Down gay Broadway to meet her beau.

Conspicuous, splendid, conscious, sweet,
She spread abroad and took the street.

And all that niceness would forbid, 5
Superb, she smiled upon and did.

Let other girls, whose happier days
Preserve the perfume of their ways,

Go modestly. The passing hour
Adds splendor to their opening flower.

But from this child too swift a doom 11
Must steal her prettiness and bloom,

Toil and weariness hide the grace
That pleads a moment from her face.

To a New York Shop-Girl. An essentially American mood, although there are parallels in modern French poetry.

So blame her not if for a day 15
She flaunts her glories while she may.

She half perceives, half understands,
Snatching her gifts with both her hands.

The little strut beneath the skirt
That lags neglected in the dirt, 20

The indolent swagger down the street—
Who can condemn such happy feet!

Innocent! vulgar—that's the truth!
Yet with the darling wiles of youth! 24

The bright, self-conscious eyes that stare
With such hauteur, beneath such hair!
Perhaps the men will find me fair!

Charming and charmed, flippant, arrayed,
Fluttered and foolish, proud, displayed,
Infinite pathos of parade! 30

The bangles and the narrowed waist—
The tinsled boa—forgive the taste!
Oh, the starved nights she gave for that,
And bartered bread to buy her hat!

She flows before the reproachful sage 35
And begs her woman's heritage.

Dear child, with the defiant eyes,
Insolent with the half surmise
We do not quite admire, I know
How foresight frowns on this vain show!

And judgment, wearily sad, may see 41
No grace in such frivolity.

Yet which of us was ever bold
To worship Beauty, hungry and cold!

Scorn famine down, proudly expressed
Apostle to what things are best 46

Let him who starves to buy the food
For his soul's comfort find her good,

Nor chide the frills and furbelows
That are the prettiest things she knows.

Poet and prophet in God's eyes 51
Make no more perfect sacrifice.

Who knows before what inner shrine
She eats with them the bread and wine?

Poor waif! One of the sacred few 55
That madly sought the best they knew!

Dear—let me lean my cheek tonight
Close, close to yours. Ah, that is right.

How warm and near! At last I see
One beauty shines for thee and me. 60

So let us love and understand—
Whose hearts are hidden in God's hand.

And we will cherish your brief spring
And all its fragile flowering.

God loves all prettiness, and on this 65
Surely his angels lay their kiss. (1905)

GRIEVE NOT, LADIES

Oh, grieve not, ladies, if at night
Ye wake to feel your beauty going.
It was a web of frail delight,
Inconstant as an April snowing.

In other eyes, in other lands, 5
In deep fair pools, new beauty lingers,
But like spent water in your hands
It runs from your reluctant fingers.

Ye shall not keep the singing lark
That owes to earlier skies its duty. 10
Weep not to hear along the dark
The sound of your departing beauty.

The fine and anguished ear of night
Is tuned to hear the smallest sorrow.
Oh, wait until the morning light! 15
It may not seem so gone tomorrow!

But honey-pale and rosy-red!
Brief lights that made a little shining!
Beautiful looks about us shed—
They leave us to the old repining. 20

Think not the watchful dim despair
Has come to you the first, sweethearted!
For oh, the gold in Helen's hair!
And how she cried when that departed!

Perhaps that one that took the most, 25
The swiftest borrower, wildest spender,
May count, as we would not, the cost—
And grow more true to us and tender.

Happy are we if in his eyes
We see no shadow of forgetting. 30
Nay—if our star sinks in those skies
We shall not wholly see its setting.

Then let us laugh as do the brooks
That such immortal youth is ours,
If memory keeps for them our looks 35
As fresh as are the springtime flowers.

Oh, grieve not, ladies, if at night
Ye wake, to feel the cold December!
Rather recall the early light
And in your loved one's arms, remember. (1905)

Grieve Not, Ladies. Cf. with "O Mistress Mine, Where Are You Roaming?" (page 368). It is a modern variation of the theme "on growing old" which Shakespeare and the Elizabethan poets used so effectively in their occasional lyrics and sonnet sequences.

*LOUIS UNTERMEYER (1885—)

SUMMONS

The eager night and the impetuous winds,
The hints and whispers of a thousand lures,
And all the swift persuasion of the spring
Surged from the stars and stones, and swept me on . . .
The smell of honeysuckles, keen and clear, 5
Startled and shook me, with the sudden thrill

*Untermeyer is an artist in jewelry, designing, and poetry. His poems reflect both a wide study of literature, especially of Latin and French poets, and an equally wide appreciation of contemporary life. He is an idealist, but as grim a fighter as any ancient Anglo-Saxon. *Challenge, Including Horace,* and *The New Adam* are some of the volumes he has published.

Summons. Cf. "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" (page 662). The evening mood has changed much since the time of "Il Penseroso" (page 392), "The Elegy" (page 416), "To Night" (page 503), and "Ode to a Nightingale" (page 510).

Of some well-known but half-forgotten voice.
A slender stream became a naked sprite,
Flashed around curious bends, and winked at me
Beyond the turns, alert and mischievous. 10
A saffron moon, dangling among the trees,
Seemed like a toy balloon caught in the boughs,
Flung there in sport by some too-mirthful breeze . . .
And as it hung there, vivid and unreal,
The whole world's lethargy was brushed away; 15
The night kept tugging at my torpid mood
And tore it into shreds. A warm air blew
My wintry slothfulness beyond the stars;
And over all indifference there streamed
A myriad urges in one rushing wave . . .
Touched with the lavish miracles of earth, 21
I felt the brave persistence of the grass;
The far desire of rivulets; the keen,
Unconquerable fervor of the thrush;
The endless labors of the patient worm; 25
The lichen's strength; the prowess of the ant;
The constancy of flowers; the blind belief
Of ivy climbing slowly toward the sun;
The eternal struggles and eternal deaths— 29
And yet the groping faith of every root!
Out of old graves arose the cry of life;
Out of the dying came the deathless call.
And, thrilling with a new sweet restlessness,
The thing that was my boyhood woke in me—
Dear, foolish fragments made me strong again; 35
Valiant adventures, dreams of those to come,
And all the vague, heroic hopes of youth,
With fresh abandon, like a fearless laugh,
Leaped up to face the heaven's unconcern . . .
And then—veil upon veil was torn aside— 40
Stars, like a host of merry girls and boys,
Danced gayly 'round me, plucking at my hand;
The night, scorning its ancient mystery,
Leaned down and pressed new courage in my heart;
The hermit thrush, throbbing with more than song, 45
Sang with a happy challenge to the skies;
Love, and the faces of a world of children,
Swept like a conquering army through my blood—
And Beauty, rising out of all its forms,
Beauty, the passion of the universe, 50
Flamed with its joy, a thing too great for tears,
And, like a wine, poured itself out for me
To drink of, to be warmed with, and to go
Refreshed and strengthened to the ceaseless fight;
To meet with confidence the cynic years; 55
Battling in wars that never can be won,
Seeking the lost cause and the brave defeat! (1914)

PRAYER

God, though this life is but a wraith,
Although we know not what we use,
Although we grope with little faith,
Give me the heart to fight—and lose.

Ever insurgent let me be; 5
Make me more daring than devout;
From sleek contentment keep me free,
And fill me with a buoyant doubt.

Open my eyes to visions girt
With beauty, and with wonder lit—
But let me always see the dirt, 11
And all that spawn and die in it.

Open my ears to music; let
Me thrill with spring's first flutes and drums—

Prayer. Cf. "Invictus" (page 600).

But never let me dare forget
The bitter ballads of the slums.

From compromise and things half-done,
Keep me, with stern and stubborn pride;
And when, at last, the fight is won
God, keep me still unsatisfied. (1914)

HOW MUCH OF GODHOOD

How much of Godhood did it take—
What purging epochs had to pass,
Ere I was fit for leaf and lake
And worthy of the patient grass?

What mighty travails must have been,
What ages must have molded me,
Ere I was raised and made akin
To dawn, the daisy, and the sea.

In what great struggles was I felled,
In what old lives I labored long,
Ere I was given a world that held
A meadow, butterflies, and song?

But oh, what cleansings and what fears,
What countless raisings from the dead,
Ere I could see Her, touched with tears,
Pillow the little weary head. (1914)

THE GREAT CAROUSAL

Oh, do not think me dead when I
Beneath a bit of earth shall lie;
Think not that aught can ever kill
My arrogant and stubborn will.
My buoyant strength, my eager soul,
My stern desire shall keep me whole
And lift me from the drowsy deep . . .
I shall not even yield to Sleep.
For Death can never take from me
My warm, insatiate energy;
He shall not dare to touch one part
Of the gay challenge of my heart.
And I shall laugh at him, and lie
Happy beneath a laughing sky;
For I have fought too joyously
To let the conqueror conquer me—
I know that, after strengthening strife,
Death cannot quench my love of life;
Rob me of my dear self, my ears
Of music, or my eyes of tears . . .
No, Death shall come in friendlier guise;
The cloths of darkness from my eyes
He shall roll back, and, lo, the sea
Of Silence shall not cover me.
He shall make soft my final bed,
Stand, like a servant, at my head;
And, thrilled with all that Death may give,
I shall lie down to rest—and live . . .

And I shall know within the earth
A softer but a deeper mirth.
The wind shall never troll a song
But I shall hear it borne along,
And echoed long before he passes
By all the little unborn grasses.
I shall be clasped by roots and rains,
Feeding and fed by living grains;

There shall not be a single flower
Above my head but bears my power,
And every butterfly or bee
That tastes the flower shall drink of me.
Ah, we shall share a lip to lip
Carousal and companionship!

The storm, like some great blustering lout,
Shall play his games with me and shout
His joy to all the countryside.
Autumn, sun-tanned and April-eyed,
Shall scamper by and send his hosts
Of leaves, like brown and merry ghosts,
To frolic over me; and stones
Shall feel the dancing in their bones.
And red-cheeked Winter too shall be
A jovial bedfellow for me,
Setting the startled hours ringing
With boisterous tales and lusty singing.

And, like a mother that has smiled
For years on every tired child,
Summer shall hold me in her lap . . .
And when the root stirs and the sap
Climbs anxiously beyond the boughs,
And all the friendly worms carouse,
Then, oh, how proudly, we shall sing
Bravuras for the feet of Spring!

How Much of Godhood. The motive of aspiration here parallels that of "Rabbi Ben Ezra" (page 558), but adds to it the tenderness of human love.
The Great Carousal. Cf. "The Soldier" (page 622).

62. **Bravuras**, brilliant musical passages.

And I shall lie forever there
Like some great king, and watch the fair
Young Spring dance on for me, and
know 65
That love and rosy valleys glow
Where'er her blithe feet touch the
earth.
And headlong joy and reckless mirth
Seeing her footsteps shall pursue.
Oh, I shall watch her smile and strew 70
Laughter and life with either hand;
And every quiver of the land,
Shall pierce me, while a joyful wave
Beats in upon my radiant grave.
Aye, like a king in deathless state 75
I shall be throned, and contemplate
The dying of the years, the vast
Vague panorama of the past,
The march of centuries, the surge
Of ages . . . . but the deathless urge 80
Shall stir me always, and my will
Shall laugh to keep me living still;
Thrilling with every call and cry—
Too much in love with life to die.
Content to touch the earth, to hear 85
The whisper of each waiting year,
To help the stars go proudly by,
To speed the timid grass; and lie,
Sharing, with every movement's breath,
The rich eternity of Death. (1914)

ON THE PALISADES

And still we climbed,
Upward into those sheer and threatening cliffs
Storming against the sky.
As though to stop our impudent assault,
The sun laid great hot hands upon our
backs, 5
And bent them down.
There were no bluff, good-humored
winds to push us on;
There were no shrubs to grasp, no staff
to aid.
Laughter was all we leaned on.

We dared not turn to view the dizzy
depth; and then 10
At last the height, and the long climb
over!

On the Palisades. Cf. "The Barrel-Organ" (page 629).

And laughing still, we drew long, panting breaths;
And our pulses jumped with a proud
and foolish thrill,
As though we had gained not merely
the top of a hill,
But a victory. 15

Up here the gaunt earth seemed to
sprawl,
Stretching its legs beyond the cramping
skies,
And lie upon its cloudy back and
yawn.
Rhythmical breezes arose,
Like a strong man awaking from
sleep,
Like the measured breathing of Day. 21
And the earth stirred and called us.
An unseen path sprang from the undergrowth,
And dodged among the bushes lightly,
beckoning us on;
Vine-snares and rocks made way for us;
Daisies threw themselves before our
feet;
The eager little armies of the grass, 27
Waving their happy spears, ran on
beside us.
And when we slackened, when we
thought of resting,
The running grasses stopped, the earth
sank back into itself, 30
Became a living pillow, a soft breast,
And every branch held out its comforting arms.
The winds pressed close, and, growing
gentle, sang to us;
And so we sat beneath the mothering
trees.

Languor leaned down 35
And, whispering peace, drew us into
ourselves;
And in the drowsy sunlight
We mused, escaping from the clanging
world,
Happy to sink in visions and soft
fantasies
For solace—and for strength; 40
To dip into a dream, as into sleep,
And wring new ardor from it, and rise
refreshed;
Irradiant, held by no soothing past,

Blundering brightly on.
Then, in an unseen flash, 45
The air was sharp with energy again;
The afternoon tingled and snapped, electric with laughter.
And he, our friend and lover, our buoyant, swaggering boy—
His soul as fiery as his flaming hair—
Began to sing this snatch of ancient rime 50
Caught from the pickers in the cotton-fields:

"Lord he thought he'd make a man.
(Dese bones gwine ter rise again.)
Made him out er earth an' han'ful er san'.
(Dese bones gwine ter rise again.) 55

"I know it; indeed, I know it, brudders;
I know it. Dese bones gwine ter rise again.

"Thought he'd make an 'umman, too;
(Dese bones gwine ter rise again.)
Didn't know 'zackly what ter do. 60
(Dese bones gwine ter rise again.)

"Tuk one rib f'um Adam's side.
(Dese bones gwine ter rise again.)
Made Miss Eve for to be his bride.
(Dese bones gwine ter rise again.)"

Five hundred feet below us lay the world.
The Sunday-colored crowds busy at play, 67
The children, the tawdry lovers, and the far-off tremor of ships,
Came to us, caught us out of the blurring vastness,
As things remembered from dreams....
And still he sang, while we joined in with childlike eagerness 71
The deep infectious music of a childlike race:

"Sot 'em in a gyarden rich an' fair;
(Dese bones gwine ter rise again.)
Tol' 'em day could eat w'atever wuz dere.
(Dese bones gwine ter rise again.) 76

"F'um one tree you mus' not eat;
(Dese bones gwine ter rise again.)
Ef you do, you'll have to skeet!
(Dese bones gwine ter rise again.) 80

"Sarpint woun' him roun' er trunk;
(Dese bones gwine ter rise again.)
At Miss Eve his eye he wunk.
(Dese bones gwine ter rise again.)

"I know it; indeed, I know it, brudders; 85
I know it—"

Like a blue snake uncoiled,
The lazy river, stretching between the banks,
Smoothed out its rippling folds, splotchy with sunlight,
And slept again, basking in silence. 90
A sea-gull chattered stridently;
We heard, breaking the rhythms of the song,
The cough of the asthmatic motor-boat
Spluttering toward the pier....
And stillness again. 95

"Lord he come wid a 'ponstrous voice;
(Dese bones gwine ter rise again.)
Shook dis whole earth to its joists.
(Dese bones gwine ter rise again.)

"'Adam, Adam, where art thou?' 100
(Dese bones gwine ter rise again.)
'Yas, good Lord, I's a-comin' now.'
(Dese bones gwine ter rise again.)

"'Stole my apples, I believe—'
(Dese bones gwine ter rise again.) 105
'No, Marse Lord, I 'speck 'twas Eve.'
(Dese bones gwine ter rise again.)"

The little boat drew nearer toward the land,
Still puffing like a wheezy runner out of breath.
And we could see, crowding its narrow decks, 110
The little human midges, remote and so unhuman,
Seeming to belong less to life than the fearless ants,
That swarmed upon the remnants of our lunch,
Heedless of all the gods on whom they casually dared to climb.
So far the people seemed! 115
And still a faint stirring reached us;

A thin thread of music flung its airy filaments toward heaven,
Where we, the happy deities, sat enthroned.
Straining our ears, we caught the slender tone,
"Darling, I am growing old; silver threads among—" 120
And then it broke.....
And over us rushed the warm flood of the human need.
Out of the frayed, cheap song something thrust out

And gripped us like a warm and powerful hand.
No longer Olympian, aloof upon our solemn eminence, 125
We crumbled on our heights and yearned to them.
The very distance had a chill for us.
What if, of a sudden, the boat should topple and plunge;
And there should rise a confused cry of people, and the faint, high voice of a child;
And heads should bob in the water, and sink like rotten corks, 130
And we, up here so helpless,
Unhuman, and remote . . .

A twilight mist stole up the bay;
In a near-by clump a screech-owl wailed;
A breeze blew strangely cold, and, with a covert haste, 135
We gathered up our things, whistled a breath too loud,
And took the path down to the earth we knew—
The earth we knew, the dear and casual world
Of sleep that followed struggle, struggle that called from sleep—
The harsh, beloved, immortal invitation. 140

And as we walked, the song sprang up again;
And as we sang, the words took on new power and majesty.
The dying sun became a part of them,
Gathering his fires in one last singing beam,
In one bright, lyric death. 145
The skies caught up the chorus, thundering it back
From every cranny of the windy heavens;
And, rising from the rocks and silent waters,
Hailing the happy energy as its own,
The flood of life laughed with that gay conviction: 150

I know it. Indeed, I know it, brothers,
I know it. These bones will rise again . . .

Lulled by no soft and easy dreams,
Out of the crowded agonies of birth on birth,
Refreshed and radiant, 155
These bones will rise.
Out of the very arms of cradling Death,
These bones! (1917)

HIGHMOUNT

Hills you have answered the craving
That spurred me to come;
You have opened your deep, blue bosom
And taken me home.

The sea had filled me with the stress 5
Of its own restfulness;
My voice was in that angry roll
Of passion beating upon the world.
The ground beneath me shifted; I was swirled
In an implacable flood that howled to see 10
Its breakers rising in me;
A torrent rushing through my soul
And tearing things free
I could not control.
A monstrous impatience, a stubborn and vain 15
Repetition of madness and longing, of question and pain,
Driving me up to the brow of this hill—
Calling and questioning still.

And you—you smile
In ordered calm; 20
You wrap yourself in cloudy contemplation while
The winds go shouting their heroic psalm;

Highmount. Cf. "The Shore's Song to the Sea" (page 704).

The streams press lovingly about your feet;
And trees, like birds escaping from the head,
Sit in great flocks and fold their broad green wings . . 25
A cow bell rings
Like a sound blurred by sleep,
Giving the silence a rhythm
That makes it twice as deep . . . . .
Somewhere a farm-hand sings 30

And here you stand
Breasting the elemental sea,
And put forth an invisible hand
To comfort me.
Rooted in quiet confidence, you rise 35
Above the frantic and assailing years;
Your silent faith is louder than the cries;
The shattering fears
Break and subside when they encounter you.
You know their doubts, the desperate questions— 40
And the answers, too.

Hills, you are strong; and my burdens
Are scattered like foam.
You have opened your deep, blue bosom
And taken me home.

(1917)

REVEILLE

What sudden bugle calls us in the night
And wakes us from a dream that we had shaped,
Flinging us sharply up against a fight
We thought we had escaped?

It is no easy waking, and we win 5
No final peace; our victories are few.
But still imperative forces pull us in
And sweep us somehow through.

Summoned by a supreme and confident power
That wakes our sleeping courage like a blow, 10
We rise, half-shaken, to the challenging hour,
And answer it—and go. . . (1917)

Reveille. Cf. "Thy Voice Is Heard Through Rolling Drums" (page 532) and "Invictus" (page 600).

*CALE YOUNG RICE (1872-

HOW MANY WAYS

How many ways the Infinite has
Tonight, in earth and sky:
A falling star, a rustling leaf,
The night-wind ebbing by.
How many ways the Infinite has: 5
A fire-fly over the lea,
A whippoorwill in the wooded hill,
And your dear love to me.

How many ways the Infinite has:
The moon out of the East; 10
A cloud that waits her shepherding,
To wander silver-fleeced.
How many ways the Infinite has:
A home-light in the West,
And joy deep-glowing in your eyes, 15
Wherein is all my rest. (1918)

"ALL'S WELL"

The illimitable leaping of the sea,
The mouthing of his madness to the moon,
The seething of his endless sorcery,
His prophecy no power can attune,
Swept over me as, on the sounding prow 5
Of a great ship that steered into the stars,
I stood and felt the awe upon my brow
Of death and destiny and all that mars.

The wind that blew from Cassiopeia cast
Wanly upon my ear a rune that rung; 10
The sailor in his eyrie on the mast
Sang an "All's well," that to the spirit clung
Like a lost voice from some aërial realm
Where ships sail on forever to no shore,
Where Time gives Immortality the helm, 15
And fades like a far phantom from life's door.

*A Kentucky poet, whose poems reflect a widespread interest in nature and in man. He shows the influence both of the classics and of Whitman. His poems and plays are now collected in two volumes.

All's Well. Cf. "Bermudas" (page 404) and "Hymn" (page 412). 9. **Cassiopeia**, a constellation.

"And is all well, O Thou Unwearia-
able,
Who launchest worlds upon bewildered
space,"
Rose in me, "All? or did thy hand grow
dull
Building this world that bears a piteous
race? 20
O was it launched too soon or launched
too late?
Or can it be a derelict that drifts
Beyond thy ken toward some reef of
Fate
On which Oblivion's sand forever
shifts?"

The sea grew softer as I questioned—
calm 25
With mystery that like an answer
moved,
And from infinity there fell a balm,
The old peace that God *is*, though all
unproved.
The old faith that though gulfs sidereal
stun
The soul, and knowledge drown within
their deep, 30
There is no world that wanders, no
not one
Of all the millions, that He does not
keep. (1921)

THE SHORE'S SONG TO THE SEA

Out on the rocks primeval,
The gray Maine rocks that slant and
break to the sea,
With the bay and juniper round them,
And the leagues on leagues before them,
And the terns and gulls wheeling and
crying, wheeling and crying over,
I sat heart-still and listened. 6

And first I could only hear the wind in
my ears,
And the foam trying to fill the high rock-
shallows.

The Shore's Song to the Sea. Cf. "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" (page 662) and "On the Palisades" (page 700) in their complete form. Whitman made significant use of the lyric within the lyric, and has been followed by many American poets. Tennyson used a similar device in *The Princess* and "The Brook."

And then, over the wind, over the
whitely blossoming foam,
Low, low, like a lover's song beginning,
I heard the nuptial pleading of the old
shore, 11
A pleading ever occultly growing louder:

O sea, glad bride of me!
*Born of the bright ether and given to
wed me,*
*Given to glance, ever, for me, and gleam
and dance in the sun,* 15
*Come to my arms, come to my reaching
arms,*
*That seem so still and unavailing to take
you, and hold you,*
Yet never forget,
Never by day or night,
The hymeneal delights of your embracings.

*Come, for the moon, my rival, shall not
have you;* 21
*No, for though twice daily afar he beckons
and you go,*
*You, my bride, a little way back to meet
him,*
*As if he once had been your lover, he, too,
and again enspelled you,*
Soon, soon, I know it is only feigning! 25
*For turning, playfully turning, tidally
turning,*
*You rush foamingly, swiftly back to my
arms!*

*And so would I have you rush; so rush
now!*
*Come from the sands where you have
stayed too long,*
*Come from the reefs where you have wan-
dered silent,* 30
*For ebbings are good, the restful ebbings
of love,*
But, oh, the bridal flowings of it are better!
*And now I would have you loose again
my tresses,*
*My locks rough and weedy, rough and
brown and brinily tangled,*
*But, oh, again as a bridegroom's, when
your tide whispering in,* 35
Lifts them up, pulsingly up with kisses!

*Come with your veil thrown back, breaking
to spray!*
And, oh, with plangent passion!

Come with your naked sweetness, salt and wholesome, to my bosom;
Let not a cave or crevice of me miss you, or cranny, 40
For, oh, the nuptial joy you float into me,
The cooling ambient clasp of you, I have waited overlong,
And I need to know again its marriage meaning!
For I think it is not alone to bring forth life, that I mate you;
More than life is the beauty of life with love! 45
Plentiful are the children that you bear to me, the blossoms,
The fruits and all the creatures at your breast dewily fed,
But mating is troubled with a far higher meaning—
A hint of a consummation for all things.
Come utterly then, 50
Utterly to me come,
And let us surge together, clasped close, in infinite union,
Until we reach a transcendence of all birth, and all dying,
An ecstasy holding the universe blended—
Such ecstasy as is its ultimate Aim! 55

So sang the shore, the long bay-scented shore,
Broken by many an isle, many an inlet bird-embosomed,
And the sea gave answer, bridally, tidally turning,
And leaped, radiant, into his rocky arms!
(1921)

TRANSIENCY

(TO A. H. R.)

Come, let us watch that rock drown in the tide
(So many things must go, so many things!).
Once we were young and the sea was not so wide,
Or love had wings.

Once we could round the earth without a sail, 5
(The magic winds are gone, the magic foam!)
Where was the harbor that we did not hail,
That was not home?

Come, we will watch the moon with thoughts, not dreams.
(Whatever goes, love stays, love warm and wise!) 10
Wingéd is youth; and yet—our way *still* seems
Toward paradise! (1922)

Transiency. Cf. "We'll Go No More a-Roving" (page 482).

*MARGARET STEELE ANDERSON
(1867-1921)

THE BREAKING

(*The Lord God speaks to a youth*)

Bend now thy body to the common weight!
(But oh, that vine-clad head, those limbs of morn!
Those proud young shoulders I myself made straight!
How shall ye wear the yoke that must be worn?)

Look thou, my son, what wisdom comes to thee! 5
(But oh, that singing mouth, those radiant eyes!
Those dancing feet—that I myself made free!
How shall I sadden them to make them wise?)

Nay then, thou shalt! Resist not, have a care:
(Yea, I must work my plans who sovereign sit! 10
Yet do not tremble so! I cannot bear—
Though I am God—to see thee so submit!) (1913)

*A Kentucky poet and art critic who did not write a large amount of verse, but whose poem "The Breaking" merits comparison with "Pater Filio" (page 605) and "A Broken Song" (page 629). Her poems are collected in *The Flame in the Wind.*

*WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT (1886-)

THE FALCONER OF GOD

I flung my soul to the air like a falcon flying.
I said, "Wait on, wait on, while I ride below!
I shall start a heron soon
In the marsh beneath the moon—
A strange white heron rising with silver on its wings, 5
Rising and crying
Wordless, wondrous things;
The secret of the stars, of the world's heartstrings
The answer to their woe.
Then stoop thou upon him, and grip and hold him so!" 10

My wild soul waited on as falcons hover.
I beat the reedy fens as I trampled past.
I heard the mournful loon
In the marsh beneath the moon.
And then with feathery thunder—the bird of my desire 15
Broke from the cover
Flashing silver fire.
High up among the stars I saw his pinions spire.
The pale clouds gazed aghast
As my falcon stooped upon him, and gripped and held him fast. 20

My soul dropped through the air—with heavenly plunder?—
Gripping the dazzling bird my dreaming knew?
Nay! but a piteous freight,
A dark and heavy weight
Despoiled of silver plumage, its voice forever stilled— 25
All of the wonder
Gone that ever filled
Its guise with glory. Oh, bird that I have killed,
How brilliantly you flew
Across my rapturous vision when first I dreamed of you! 30

Yet I fling my soul on high with new endeavor,
And I ride the world below with a joyful mind.
I shall start a heron soon
In the marsh beneath the moon—
A wondrous silver heron its inner darkness fledges! 35
I beat forever
The fens and the sedges.
The pledge is still the same—for all disastrous pledges,
All hopes resigned!
My soul still flies above me for the quarry it shall find. (1914)

*A young Yale poet who has given promise of a brilliant career as a poet and as a novelist. "The Falconer of God" is also the title of one of his books of poems.

The Falconer of God. Cf. "Reveille" (page 703). Modern poets frequently show the contrast between the aspirations of youth and the realities of life. Cf. the opening stanzas of "Rabbi Ben Ezra" (page 558), "Sing Me a Song of Lad That Is Gone" (page 598), "In School-Days" (page 646)

*THOMAS S. JONES, JR. (1882–1932)

AS IN A ROSE-JAR

As in a rose-jar filled with petals sweet
Blown long ago in some old garden place,
Mayhap, where you and I, a little space
Drank deep of love and knew that love was fleet—
Or leaves once gathered from a lost retreat 5
By one who never will again retrace
Her silent footsteps—one, whose gentle face
Was fairer than the roses at her feet;

So deep within the vase of memory 9
I keep my dust of roses fresh and dear
As in the days before I knew the smart
Of time and death. Nor aught can take from me
The haunting fragrance that still lingers here—
As in a rose-jar, so within the heart! (1906)

*Thomas S. Jones, Jr. was born in Boonville, New York, and is active in New York City as a critic and writer of poems which are exquisite in their simplicity, romanticism, and mysticism. *The Rose-Jar* and *The Voice in the Silence* are his two most important books of poems.

As in a Rose-Jar. Cf. "On the Way to Kew" (page 601).

YOUTH

I shall remember then,
At twilight time or in the hush of dawn,
Or yet, mayhap, when on a straying wind
The scent of lilac comes, or when
Some strain of music startles and is gone. 5

Old dreams, old roses, all so far behind,
Blossoms and birds and ancient shadow-trees,
Whispers at sunset, the low hum of bees,
And sheep that graze beneath a summer sun.
Will they, too, come, they who in yester-year 10
Walked the same paths and in the first of spring,
And shall I hear
Their distant voices murmuring?

I shall remember then
When youth is done, 15
With the dim years grown gray;
And I shall wonder what it is that ends,
And why they seem so very far away—
Old dreams, old roses, . . and old friends.
(1906)

MAY-EVE

Over the hill, over the hill,
The dews are wet and the shadows long;
Twilight lingers and all is still
Save for the call of a faëry-song.

Calling, calling out of the west, 5
Over the hill in the dusk of day,
Over the hill to a land of rest,
A land of peace with the world away.

Never again where grasses sweep,
And lights are low, and the cool brakes still— 10
Never a song, but a dreamless sleep,
Over the hill . . . over the hill.
(1906)

Youth. Cf. "In the Highlands" (page 598).
May-Eve. Cf. "Voices" (page 628).

TO SONG

Here shall remain all tears for lovely things
And here enshrined the longing of great hearts,
Caught on a lyre whence waking wonder starts,
To mount afar upon immortal wings;
Here shall be treasured tender wonderings, 5
The faintest whisper that the soul imparts,
All silent secrets and all gracious arts
Where nature murmurs of her hidden springs.

O magic of a song! here loveliness
May sleep unhindered of life's mortal toll, 10
And noble things stand towering o'er the tide;
Here mid the years, untouched by time or stress,
Shall sweep, on every wind that stirs the soul,
The music of a voice that never died!
(1911)

OF ONE WHO WALKS ALONE

These are the ways of one who walks alone,
Sweet silent ways that lead toward twilight skies,
Bees softly winging where a low wind sighs
Through the hills' hollow, cool and clover-blown.

These are the ways that call one back again 5
To old forgotten things in faded years,
Swift on a moment of remembered tears
They stand from out the dust where they have lain.

These are the ways life's simple secrets bless,
Keen homely scents borne by each haunted wind— 10

Of One Who Walks Alone. Cf. "Ode to a Nightingale" (page 510), and "The Wanderers" (page 626).

Here in the silence one may ever find
That last strange peace whose name is loneliness. (1911)

DUSK AT SEA

Tonight eternity alone is near:
The sea, the sunset, and the darkening blue;
Within their shelter is no space for fear—
Only the wonder that such things are true.

The thought of you is like the dusk at sea— 5
Space and wide freedom and old shores left far,
The shelter of a lone immensity
Sealed by the sunset and the evening star. (1911)

*CARL SANDBURG (1878-)

CHICAGO

Hog Butcher for the World,
Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat,
Player with Railroads and the Nation's Freight Handler;
Stormy, husky, brawling,
City of the Big Shoulders: 5

They tell me you are wicked and I believe them, for I have seen your painted women under the gas lamps luring the farm boys.
And they tell me you are crooked, and I answer: Yes, it is true I have seen the gunman kill and go free to kill again.
And they tell me you are brutal and my reply is: On the faces of women and children I have seen the marks of wanton hunger.
And having answered so, I turn once more to those who sneer at this my city, and I give them back the sneer and say to them:
Come and show me another city with lifted head singing so proud to be alive and coarse and strong and cunning. 10
Flinging magnetic curses amid the toil of piling job on job, here is a tall bold slugger set vivid against the little soft cities;
Fierce as a dog with tongue lapping for action, cunning as a savage pitted against the wilderness,
Bareheaded,
Shoveling,
Wrecking, 15
Planning,
Building, breaking, rebuilding.
Under the smoke, dust all over his mouth, laughing with white teeth,
Under the terrible burden of destiny laughing as a young man laughs,
Laughing even as an ignorant fighter laughs who has never lost a battle, 20
Bragging and laughing that under his wrist is the pulse, and under his ribs the heart of the people,
Laughing!
Laughing the stormy, husky, brawling laughter of Youth, half-naked, sweating, proud to be Hog Butcher, Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat, Player with Railroads, and Freight Handler to the Nation.

(1916)

LOST

Desolate and lone,
All night long on the lake
Where fog trails and mist creeps,
The whistle of a boat
Calls and cries unendingly, 5
Like some lost child
In tears and trouble,
Hunting the harbor's breast
And the harbor's eyes. (1916)

Dusk at Sea. Cf. "Composed by the Sea-Side, near Calais, August, 1802" (page 468).

*Carl Sandburg is a Chicago journalist who came of Swedish stock. His profession has made him see very closely the heart of America's industrial life, and he writes with vivid power and freedom of expression. Sandburg is both an idealist and a realist, for out of the raw stuff of life he builds ideas of power and beauty. Like Browning, he believes that life must be seen as it is, and not selectively. *Chicago, Cornhuskers,* and *Smoke and Steel* are three of Sandburg's volumes of poetry. The poems "Chicago" and "Smoke and Steel" are as yet the most vivid and adequate expressions of modern American industrial life. But that is not all of Sandburg, as the equally realistic but tenderly ideal pictures in "Lost," "The Harbor," "Under the Harvest Moon," and "Nocturne in a Deserted Brickyard" show. Sandburg may not be the consummation of Whitman's vision of the American poet, but he is certainly a step on the way.

THE HARBOR

Passing through huddled and ugly walls,
By doorways where women haggard
Looked from their hunger-deep eyes,
Haunted with shadows of hunger-hands,
Out from the huddled and ugly walls, 5
I came sudden, at the city's edge,
On a blue burst of lake—
Long lake waves breaking under the sun
On a spray-flung curve of shore;
And a fluttering storm of gulls, 10
Masses of great gray wings
And flying white bellies
Veering and wheeling free in the open. (1916)

KILLERS

I am singing to you
Soft as a man with a dead child speaks;
Hard as a man in handcuffs,
Held where he cannot move.

Under the sun 5
Are sixteen million men,
Chosen for shining teeth,
Sharp eyes, hard legs,
And a running of young warm blood in their wrists.

And a red juice runs on the green grass; 10
And a red juice soaks the dark soil.
And the sixteen million are killing . . . and killing and killing.

I never forget them day or night:
They beat on my head for memory of them; 15
They pound on my heart and I cry back to them,
To their homes and women, dreams and games.

I wake in the night and smell the trenches,
And hear the low stir of sleepers in lines—
Sixteen million sleepers and pickets in the dark;
Some of them long sleepers for always, 20
Some of them tumbling to sleep tomorrow for always,
Fixed in the drag of the world's heartbreak,
Eating and drinking, toiling . . . on a long job of killing.

Sixteen million men. (1916)

UNDER THE HARVEST MOON

Under the harvest moon,
When the soft silver
Drips shimmering
Over the garden nights,
Death, the gray mocker, 5
Comes and whispers to you
As a beautiful friend
Who remembers.

Under the summer roses
When the flagrant crimson 10
Lurks in the dusk
Of the wild red leaves,
Love, with little hands,
Comes and touches you
With a thousand memories, 15
And asks you
Beautiful, unanswerable questions.
(1916)

NOCTURNE IN A DESERTED BRICKYARD

Stuff of the moon
Runs on the lapping sand
Out to the longest shadows.
Under the curving willows,
And round the creep of the wave line, 5
Fluxions of yellow and dusk on the waters
Make a wide dreaming pansy of an old pond in the night. (1916)

SMOKE AND STEEL

Smoke of the fields in spring is one;
Smoke of the leaves in autumn another;

Smoke of a steel-mill roof or a battle-
ship funnel—
They all go up in a line with a smoke-
stack,
Or they twist . . . in the slow twist
. . . of the wind. 5

If the north wind comes, they run to the
south.
If the west wind comes, they run to the
east.
By this sign
all smokes
know each other. 10
Smoke of the fields in spring and leaves
in autumn,
Smoke of the finished steel, chilled and
blue,
By the oath of work they swear: "I
know you."

Hunted and hissed from the center
Deep down long ago when God made
us over, 15
Deep down are the cinders we came
from—
You and I and our heads of smoke.

. . . . . .

Some of the smokes God dropped on
the job
Cross on the sky and count our years
And sing in the secrets of our num-
bers; 20
Sing their dawns and sing their even-
ings,
Sing an old log-fire song:
You may put the damper up,
You may put the damper down,
The smoke goes up the chimney just
the same. 25

Smoke of a city sunset skyline;
Smoke of a country dusk horizon—
They cross on the sky and count our
years.

. . . . . .

Smoke of a brick-red dust
Winds on a spiral 30
Out of the stacks
For a hidden and glimpsing moon.

This, said the bar-iron shed to the
blooming mill,
This is the slang of coal and steel.
The day-gang hands it to the night-
gang; 35
The night-gang hands it back.

Stammer at the slang of this—
Let us understand half of it.
In the rolling mills and sheet mills,
In the harr and boom of the blast
fires, 40
The smoke changes its shadow
And men change their shadow;
A nigger, a wop, a bohunk changes.

A bar of steel—it is only
Smoke at the heart of it, smoke and the
blood of a man. 45
A runner of fire ran in it, ran out, ran
somewhere else,
And left—smoke and the blood of a
man
And the finished steel, chilled and
blue.

So fire runs in, runs out, runs somewhere
else again,
And the bar of steel is a gun, a wheel, a
nail, a shovel, 50
A rudder under the sea, a steering-gear
in the sky;
And always dark in the heart and
through it,
Smoke and the blood of a man.
Pittsburgh, Youngstown, Gary—they
make their steel with men.

In the blood of men and the ink of
chimneys 55
The smoke nights write their oaths:
Smoke into steel and blood into steel;
Homestead, Braddock, Birmingham,
they make their steel with men.
Smoke and blood is the mix of steel.

The birdmen drone 60
in the blue; it is steel.
a motor sings and zooms.

. . . . . .

Steel barb-wire around the Works.

Steel guns in the holsters of the guards
at the gates of the Works.
Steel ore-boats bring the loads clawed
from the earth by steel, lifted and
lugged by arms of steel, sung on
its way by the clanking clam-
shells. 65
The runners now, the handlers now, are
steel; they dig and clutch and haul;
they hoist their automatic knuckles
from job to job; they are steel mak-
ing steel.
Fire and dust and air fight in the
furnaces; the pour is timed, the
billets wriggle; the clinkers are
dumped:
Liners on the sea, skyscrapers on the
land; diving steel in the sea, climb-
ing steel in the sky.

. . . . . .

Finders in the dark, you, Steve, with
a dinner bucket, you, Steve, clump-
ing in the dusk on the sidewalks
with an evening paper for the
woman and kids, you Steve with
your head wondering where we all
end up—
Finders in the dark, Steve. I hook my
arm in cinder sleeves; we go down
the street together; it is all the
same to us; you, Steve, and the
rest of us end on the same stars;
we all wear a hat in hell together,
in hell or heaven. 70

Smoke nights now, Steve.
Smoke, smoke, lost in the sieves of
yesterday;
Dumped again to the scoops and hooks
today.
Smoke like the clocks and whistles,
always.
Smoke nights now. 75
Tomorrow—something else.

. . . . . .

Luck moons come and go;
Five men swim in a pot of red steel.
Their bones are kneaded into the bread
of steel;
Their bones are knocked into coils and
anvils 80
And the sucking plungers of sea-fighting
turbines.
Look for them in the woven frame of a
wireless station.
So ghosts hide in steel like heavy-armed
men in mirrors.
Peepers, skulkers—they shadow-dance
in laughing tombs.
They are always there and they never
answer. 85

One of them said: "I like my job; the
company is good to me; America
is a wonderful country."
One: "Jesus, my bones ache; the com-
pany is a liar; this is a free country,
like hell."
One: "I got a girl, a peach; we save up
and go on a farm and raise pigs
and be the boss ourselves."
And the others were roughneck singers
a long ways from home.
Look for them back of a steel vault
door. 90

They laugh at the cost.
They lift the bird men into the
blue.
It is steel a motor sings and zooms.

In the subway plugs and drums,
In the slow hydraulic drills, in gumbo or
gravel, 95
Under dynamo shafts in the webs of
armature spiders,
They shadow-dance and laugh at the
cost.

. . . . . .

The ovens light a red dome.
Spools of fire wind and wind.
Quadrangles of crimson sputter. 100
The lashes of dying maroon let down.
Fire and wind wash out the slag.
Forever the slag gets washed in fire and
wind.
The anthem learned by the steel is:
Do this or go hungry. 105
Look for our rust on a plow.
Listen to us in a threshing-engine
razz.
Look at our job in the running wagon
wheat.

. . . . . .

Fire and wind wash at the slag.
Box-cars, clocks, steam-shovels, churns, pistons, boilers, scissors— 110
Oh, the sleeping slag from the mountains, the slag-heavy pig-iron will go down many roads.
Men will stab and shoot with it, and make butter and tunnel rivers, and mow hay in swaths, and slit hogs and skin beeves, and steer airplanes across North America, Europe, Asia, round the world.

Hacked from a hard rock country, broken and baked in mills and smelters, the rusty dust waits
Till the clean hard weave of its atoms cripples and blunts the drill chewing a hole in it.
The steel of its plinths and flanges is reckoned, O God, in one-millionth of an inch. 115

. . . . . .

Once when I saw the curves of fire, the rough scarf women dancing,
Dancing out of the flues and smoke stacks—flying hair of fire, flying feet upside down;
Buckets and baskets of fire exploding and chortling, fire running wild out of the steady and fastened ovens;
Sparks cracking a harr-harr-huff from a solar-plexus of rock-ribs of the earth taking a laugh for themselves;
Ears and noses of fire, gibbering gorilla arms of fire, gold mud-pies, gold bird-wings, red jackets riding purple mules, scarlet autocrats tumbling from the humps of camels, assassinated czars straddling vermillion balloons; 120
I saw then the fires flash one by one: good-by: then smoke, smoke;
And in the screens the great sisters of night and cool stars, sitting women arranging their hair,
Waiting in the sky, waiting with slow easy eyes, waiting and half-murmuring:
"Since you know all
and I know nothing, 125
tell me what I dreamed last night."

. . . . . .

Pearl cobwebs in the windy rain,
in only a flicker of wind,
are caught and lost and never know again.

A pool of moonshine comes and waits, 130
but never waits long; the wind picks up
loose gold like this and is gone.

A bar of steel sleeps and looks slant-eyed
on the pearl cobwebs, the pools of moonshine;
sleeps slant-eyed a million years, 135
sleeps with a coat of rust, a vest of moths,
a shirt of gathering sod and loam.

The wind never bothers . . . a bar of steel.
The wind picks only . . . pearl cobwebs . . . pools of moonshine.

(1920)

*JOHN GOULD FLETCHER
(1886-)

IRRADIATIONS

XXXVI

Like cataracts that crash from a crumbling crag
Into the dull-blue smoldering gulf of a lake below,
Landlocked amid the mountains, so my soul
Was a gorge that was filled with the warring echoes of song.

*One phase of the modern movement in poetry has been the attempt to find a common ground between the arts of poetry, painting, and music. Symbolism or imagist poetry was known in France earlier than in America, but Fletcher, who is a Westerner from Little Rock, Arkansas, and a much traveled and very cultured man, has built up in his free verse a symbolism and imagery of his own. Out of his many volumes of poems *Irradiations* and *Breakers and Granite* are here represented. It is a question how successful nocturnes and symphonies in poetry can be. However, the attempt has certainly been worth making, for many passages in his poems are vivid and brilliant.

Of old, they wore
Shining armor, and banners of broad gold they bore;
Now they drift, like a wild bird's cry,
Downward from chill summits of the sky.
Fountains of flashing joy were their source afar;
Now they lie still, to mirror every star.
In circles of opal, ruby, blue, cut-thrown,
They drift down to a dull, dark monotone.

Pluck the loose strings, singer,
Thrum the strings;
For the wind brings distant, drowsy bells of song.
Loose the plucked string, poet,
Spurn the strings,
For the echoes of memory float through the gulf for long.

My songs seem now one humming note afar—
Light as ether, quivering 'twixt star and star;
But yet, so still
I know not whence they come, if mine they are.
Yet that low note
Increases in force as if it said, "I will."
Kindled by God's fierce breath, it would the whole world fill—
Till steadily outwards thrown,
By trumpets blazoned, from the sky down blown,
It grows a vast march, massive, monotonous, known
Of old gold trumpeteers
Through infinite years,
Bursting the white, thronged vaults of the cool sky;
Till hurtling down there falls one mad black hammer-blow.
Then the chained echoes in their maniac woe
Are loosed against the silence, to shriek uncannily.
The strings shiver faintly, poet;
Strike the strings,
Speed the song—
Tremulous upward rush of wheeling, whirling wings. (1915)

From SAND AND SPRAY: A SEA SYMPHONY

PART I. THE GALE

Allegro furioso.

Pale green-white, in a gallop across the sky,
The clouds retreating from a perilous affray
Carry the moon with them, a heavy sack of gold;
Sharp arrows, stars between them, shoot and play.

The wind, as it strikes the sand,
Clutches with rigid hands
And tears from them
Thin ribbons of pallid sleet,
Long stinging hissing drift,
Which it trails up inland.

I lean against the bitter wind;
My body plunges like a ship.
Out there I see gray breakers rise;
Their raveled beards are white,
And foam is in their eyes.
My heart is blown from me tonight
To be transfixed by all the stars.

Steadily the wind
Rages up the shore.
In the trees it roars and battles;
With rattling drums
And heavy spears,
Toward the house-fronts on it comes.

The village, a loose mass outflung,
Breaks its path.
Between the walls
It bounces, tosses in its wrath.
It is broken; it is lost.

With green-gray eyes,
With whirling arms,
With clashing feet,

With bellowing lungs,
Pale green-white in a gallop across the sky,
The wind comes.

The great gale of the winter flings himself flat upon earth. 35

He hurriedly scribbles on the sand
His transient tragic destiny.

(1915)

From SAND AND SPRAY

6. NIGHT OF STARS

Allegro brillante.

The sky immense, bejeweled with rain of stars,
Hangs over us.
The stars like a sudden explosion powder the zenith
With green and gold;
Northeast, southwest, the Milky Way's pale streamers 5
Flash past in flame;
The sky is a swirling cataract
Of fire, on high.

Over us the sky up to the zenith
Palpitates with tense glitter; 10
About our keel the foam bubbles and curdles
In phosphorescent joy.
Flame boils up to meet down-rushing flame
In the blue stillness.
Aloft a single orange meteor 15
Crashes down the sky.

(1915)

From VARIATIONS

3. THE NIGHT WINDS

Adagio lamentose.

Wind of the night, wind of the long cool shadows,
Wind from the garden gate stealing up the avenue,
Wind caressing my cool pale cheek completely,
All my happiness goes out to you.

Wind flapping aimlessly at my yellow window curtain, 5
Wind suddenly insisting on your way down to the sea,
Buoyant wind, sobbing wind, wind shuddering and plaintive,
Why come you from beyond through the night's blue mystery?

Wind of my dream, wind of the delicate beauty,
Wind strumming idly at the harp-strings of my heart; 10
Wind of the autumn—O melancholy beauty,
Touch me once—one instant—you and I shall never part!

Wind of the night, wind that has fallen silent,
Wind from the dark beyond crying suddenly, eerily,
What terrible news have you shrieked out there in the stillness? 15
The night is cool and quiet and the wind has crept to sea. (1915)

*SKYSCRAPERS

What are these—angels or demons,
Or steel and stone?
Soaring, alert,
Striped with diversified windows,
These sweep aloft, 5
And the multitude crane their necks to them—
Are they angels, or demons,
Or stone?

If the gray sapless people,
Moving along the street, thought them angels, 10
They, too, would be beautiful,
Erect and laughing to the sky for joy.
If as demons they feared them,
They would smite with fierce hatred

*From *Breakers and Granite*, by permission of the author and The Macmillan Company.

These brown haughty foreheads; 15
They would not suffer them to hold the sun in trust.
What are they, then—angels, or demons,
Or stone?

Deaf, sightless towers
Unendowed yet with life; 20
Soaring vast effort
Spent in the sky till it breaks there.
You men of my country
Who shaped these proud visions,
You have yet to find godhead, 25
Not here, but in the human heart.

(1921)

*BROADWAY'S CANYON

I

This is like the nave of an unfinished cathedral
With steep shadowy sides.
Light and shade alternate,
Repeat, and die away.
Golden traceries of sunlight, 5
Blue buttresses of shadow,
Answer like pier and column,
All the way down to the sea.

But the temple is still roofless;
Only the sky above it 10
Closes it round, encircling
With its weightless vault of blue.
There is no image or inscription or altar,
And the clamor of free-moving multitudes
Are its tireless organ tones, 15
While the hammers beat out its chimes.

II

Blue-gray smoke swings heavily,
Fuming from leaden censers,
Upward about the street.
Lamps glimmer with crimson points of flame. 20
The black canyon
Bares its gaunt, stripped sides.
Heavily, oppressively, the skies roll on above it,
Like curses yet unfulfilled.
The wind shrieks and crashes; 25
The burly trucks rumble,
Ponderous as funeral-cars, undraped, and unstrewn with flowers.

(1921)

*From *Breakers and Granite*, by permission of the author and The Macmillan Company.

*THE MOON'S ORCHESTRA

When the moon lights up
Its dull red campfire through the trees,
And floats out, like a white balloon,
Into the blue cup of the night, borne by a casual breeze,
The moon-orchestra then begins to stir. 5
Jiggle of fiddles commence their crazy dance in the darkness.
Crickets chirr
Against the stark reiteration of the rusty flutes which frogs
Puff at from rotted logs
In the swamp. 10
And then the moon begins her dance of frozen pomp
Over the lightly quivering floor of the flat and mournful river.
Her white feet slightly twist and swirl.
She is a mad girl
In an old unlit ballroom 15
Whose walls, half-guessed at through the gloom,
Are hung with the rusty crape of stark black cypress
Which show, through gaps and tatters, red stains half hidden away.

(1921)

*LINCOLN

I

Like a gaunt, scraggly pine
Which lifts its head above the mournful sandhills,
And patiently, through dull years of bitter silence,
Untended and uncared for, starts to grow;

*From *Breakers and Granite*, by permission of the author and The Macmillan Company.

Ungainly, laboring, huge— 5
The wind of the north has twisted and gnarled its branches;
Yet in the heat of midsummer days, when thunder-clouds ring the horizon,
A nation of men shall rest beneath its shade.

And it shall protect them all,
Hold everyone safe there, watching aloof in silence; 10
Until at last, one mad stray bolt from the zenith
Shall strike it in an instant down to earth.

II

There was a darkness in this man —an immense and hollow darkness,
Of which we may not speak, nor share with him nor enter;
A darkness through which strong roots stretched downward into the earth,
Toward old things: 16

Toward the herdman-kings who walked the earth and spoke with God;
Toward the wanderers who sought for they knew not what, and found their goal at last;
Toward the men who waited, only waited patiently when all seemed lost,
Many bitter winters of defeat. 20

Down to the granite of patience,
These roots swept, knotted fibrous roots, prying, piercing, seeking,
And drew from the living rock and the living waters about it,
The red sap to carry upward to the sun.

Not proud, but humble, 25
Only to serve and pass on, to endure to the end through service,
For the ax is laid at the roots of the trees, and all that bring not forth good fruit
Shall be cut down on the day to come and cast into the fire.

III

There is a silence abroad in the land today,
And in the hearts of men a deep and anxious silence; 30
And, because we are still at last, those bronze lips slowly open,
Those hollow and weary eyes take on a gleam of light.

Slowly a patient, firm-syllabled voice cuts through the endless silence,
Like laboring oxen that drag a plow through the chaos of rude clay fields:
"I went forward as the light goes forward in early spring, 35
But there were also many things which I left behind—

"Tombs that were quiet:
One, of a mother, whose brief light went out in the darkness;
One of a loved one, the snow on whose grave is long falling;
One only of a child, but it was mine. 40

"Have you forgotten your graves? Go; question them in anguish,
Listen long to their unstirred lips. From your hostages to silence
Learn there is no life without death, no dawn without sun-setting,
No victory but to him who has given all."

The clamor of cannon dies down, the furnace-mouth of the battle is silent, 45
The midwinter sun dips and descends, the earth takes on afresh its bright colors.
But he whom we mocked and obeyed not, he whom we scorned and mistrusted,
He has descended, like a god, to his rest.

Over the uproar of cities,
Over the million intricate threads of life weaving and crossing, 50
In the midst of problems we know not, tangling, perplexing, ensnaring,
Rises one white tomb alone.

Beam over it, stars,
Wrap it 'round, stripes—stripes red for the pain that he bore for you—
Enfold it forever, O flag, rent, soiled, but repaired through your anguish; 55
Long as you keep him there safe, the nations shall bow to your law.

Strew over him flowers:
Blue forget-me-nots from the north and the bright pink arbutus
From the east, and from the west, rich orange blossom;
But from the heart of the land take the passion-flower— 60

Rayed, violet, dim,
With the nails that pierced, the cross that he bore and the circlet;
And beside it there lay also one lonely snow-white magnolia,
Bitter for remembrance of the healing which has passed. 1916 (1921)

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General Note. The field of personal, subjective, emotional expression in poetry, by whatever name it is called, has been studied both extensively and intensively. The following brief list includes a few of the best treatises on various phases of the subject.

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TOPICS FOR STUDY, DISCUSSION, AND WRITTEN REPORT

I. THE EPIC

1. The characteristics of popular epic story telling as exemplified in *Beowulf* and *Deirdre*.

2. The method of story telling employed by the popular epic contrasted with that of the ballad.

3. What are the constant and what the variable elements of interest in English poetic narratives?

4. What are the primitive social and literary elements in the popular epic?

5. Compare the Teutonic epic age with that of the patriarchs in the Bible.

6. Men like gods: a study in the apotheosis of the epic hero.

7. Beowulf, Naoise, and Satan as epic heroic figures.

8. Compare the English heroic popular ballads with those sung by the minstrels in *Beowulf*.

9. The hero of English popular epic and ballad contrasted with the American pioneer hero.

10. Celtic superstitions and folklore in *Cuchulain of Muirthemne*. For information consult W. B. Yeats's *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry* and Lady Gregory's *Vision and Beliefs in the West of Ireland*.

11. The dragon myths in Anglo-Saxon, Celtic, and Germanic literature.

12. The Anglo-Saxon and the Celtic view of life as revealed in *Beowulf* and *Deirdre*.

13. The Anglo-Saxon and the Celtic idea of fate as revealed in *Beowulf*, *Deirdre*, and Synge's *Riders to the Sea*.

14. *Beowulf* and *The River* as studies of fatalism in nature.

15. Compare the epic descriptions of *Beowulf* and *Deirdre* with the historical descriptions of *The Conspiracy of Pontiac* and *Lord Clive*.

16. The Anglo-Saxon and Celtic view of nature in epic and lyric poetry.

17. The differences in the Anglo-Saxon and Celtic ideas of humor and irony as expressed in epic and lyric poetry.

18. The humor and irony in *Beowulf*, *The Diverting History of John Gilpin*, *Tam O'Shanter*, and *Satires of Circumstance*.

19. Study the ideals of the epic warrior in comparison with those of the medieval knight.

20. Has the spirit of the epic and the popular ballad disappeared from literature and reappeared in the moving pictures?

21. Is the type of appeal the same in the popular epic and in the dime novel type of literature written for boys?

22. Study the development of the murder and blood-feud interest as developed in epic, ballad, and popular newspaper.

23. The epic hero used his physical strength. The hero of a melodrama or detective story uses his physical strength only incidentally. What accounts for the change of popular taste?

24. The epic hero represented success as it seemed to his day, i.e., in overcoming his enemies both natural and supernatural. The modern hero of the magazine story or advertisement overcomes different enemies. What is the nature of the change in national ideals and what is the cause?

25. The feminine characters of the epic and popular ballad are beautiful and elemental. How do they differ from the heroines of modern fiction? How do you account for the difference?

26. Compare the narrative quality of the War in Heaven in *Paradise Lost* with that of the battles in *Beowulf* and *Deirdre*.

27. The characters of Beowulf and Naoise represent a tribal or national ideal; that of Satan represents what Milton thought and felt. What is the difference in method and effect?

28. The power of description in *Beowulf* and *Deirdre* compared with that of *Paradise Lost*.

29. What evidences are there of sustained composition in Milton but not in the popular epics?

30. The sea has always been a dominant influence in English history. Trace the nature of that influence as it appears in the selections from the popular epic given in this book.

31. The English and Americans have always been adventurers and explorers. Define this spirit and compare its manifestations in the epic with those in lyric poetry and history.

II. MEDIEVAL NARRATIVE POETRY AND MODERN IMITATIONS

1. The narrative method or social ideals of English medieval romance as it appears either in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* or in *Le Morte Darthur*.

2. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* as a presentation of chivalric ideals.

3. Contrast the handling of description and of characterization in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* with that in either *Beowulf* or *Deirdre*.

4. The chivalric ideals of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *Le Morte Darthur* compared with those of *The Passing of Arthur* from *The Idylls of the King*.

5. Trace the development of the English ideal of the hero in *Beowulf*, *Deirdre*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *Le Morte Darthur*, the ballads of history and outlawry, and Hakluyt's voyages.

6. What differences are there between the ideal of the hero in English medieval romance and the ideal of the pioneer in English and American literature?

7. Contrast the literary attitude and ideals of English medieval romance with that of one such modern poetic variant as *The Eve of Saint Agnes* or *Christabel*.

8. Differences in narrative technique between the medieval romance and the English popular ballads.

9. Make a study of the narrative characteristics of Chaucer's poetry.

10. The nature of the humor of Chaucer compared with that of *Beowulf* or Burns.

11. Study Chaucer's method of characterization in the *Prologue* to *The Canterbury Tales* and compare it with that of Browning, Masters in *Spoon River Anthology*, and Amy Lowell in *Patterns* and *Number 3 on the Docket*.

12. Compare Chaucer's mingling of narrative and characterization with that of Browning in the selections in the chapter on Modern Narrative Poetry.

13. Study Chaucer's use of irony in *The Pardoner's Tale* in relation to that of Hardy in *Satires of Circumstance*, Masefield in *The River*, and Masters in *Spoon River Anthology*.

14. Compare the elements of foreboding and of the supernatural in Chaucer's *The Pardoner's Tale* with similar elements in any one of the following: the ballads dealing with the supernatural, Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and *Christabel*, Francis Thompson's *The Hound of Heaven*, Hazlitt's *On the Fear of Death*, Poe's *The Cask of Amontillado*, Hawthorne's *Rappaccini's Daughter*, Stevenson's *The Sire de Malétroit's Door*, Quiller-Couch's *The Roll-Call of the Reef*, Dwight's *In the Pasha's Garden*, and Katherine Mansfield's *The Garden-Party*.

15. The death of the hero in *Beowulf*, *Deirdre*, *Le Morte Darthur*, *The Passing of Arthur* from *The Idylls of the King*, *The Death of Robin Hood*, and *Johnie Armstrong*.

16. Common denominators in plot in Chaucer's *The Pardoner's Tale* and Kipling's *The King's Ankus*.

17. The heroines of medieval romance and modern adaptations thereof are physically beautiful, wraith-like, and often intellectually unreal. The enchantresses and witches are frequently not beautiful, but they have brains. Contrast several of these heroines with Chaucer's women in *The Prologue* to *The Canterbury Tales*. What are the essential differences in characterization and interest?

18. How does the modern heroine of fiction differ from the medieval? Make your comparison specific.

19. The medieval knight was a man of one idea and not subtle. What has happened to change the modern hero of fiction from the medieval type? Make the contrast specific by using one or more modern novels.

20. How do you account for the continued popularity today of stories like *The Pardoner's Tale*, whereas the type represented by medieval romances of chivalry has lost its popularity?

21. Tennyson's knights and ladies have been said to be mid-Victorian society folk. Examine *The Idylls of the King* and test the truth or falseness of this statement.

22. Medieval society had certain social conventions which appear in the romances of chivalry. Modern society has certain social conventions which appear in literature, in the moving picture, and on the stage. Do any basic conventions appear unchanged in the literature of both periods?

23. Do the morality, allegory, and didacticism of Tennyson in *The Idylls of the King* affect adversely the reader's interest in the story?

24. What elements of medieval romance have proved most attractive to modern poets?

25. From your own study of medieval romance should you say that the type has an interest for the modern audience, or not? If there be an interest, in what does it consist?

III. THE BALLAD

1. Write a ballad (in the conventional meter) in which you use as a subject some domestic tragedy taken from a current newspaper.

2. How is the story told in the ballad?

3. Show how the popular conception of upper class life is expressed in the ballad.

4. Contrast the sentimentalism of the ballads of art with the lack of it in the popular ballads.

5. Compare Froissart's account of the battle of Otterburn with the accounts given in the ballads *The Battle of Otterburne* and *The Hunting of the Cheviot.*

6. Study the dramatic elements in *Edward, Lord Randal,* and other ballads containing dialogue in comparison with Synge's *Riders to the Sea.*

7. After studying at first hand some children's game songs—like *London Bridge*—point out what ballad characteristics they exhibit.

8. Find the story of *The Marriage of Sir Gawain* in the Arthurian cycle of romances and compare it with *Kemp Owyne.*

9. The return from the dead in ballads. What differences are there between the ballad treatment of this theme and the treatment in Scott's *The Eve of St. John,* Wordsworth's *Laodamia,* and Quiller-Couch's *The Roll-Call of the Reef?*

10. The element of superstition in the ballads.

11. Compare *Sir Patrick Spens,* Longfellow's *The Wreck of the Hesperus,* and Kingsley's *The Three Fishers.*

12. The ballads of outlawry as evidence of social protest. How does the treatment of social protest in the ballads differ from that in history as shown in Green's *The Peasant Revolt?*

13. Domestic comedy as shown in *The Farmer's Curst Wife, Get Up and Bar the Door,* and Burns's *Kellyburn Braes.*

14. Bride-stealing in *Robin Hood and Allin a Dale,* Scott's *Lochinvar,* and other narrative poems.

15. Contrast the "dying for love" tradition in the English ballad, the lyric, and the medieval romance, with modern love conventions as expressed in current literature and photo-drama.

16. The heroic, pathetic, or "lost" child as a figure in the ballads of art.

17. The witch-woman in English literature (Keats's *La Belle Dame Sans Merci,* Coleridge's *Christabel,* etc.). Has she been replaced in modern literature?

18. Sir Walter Scott as an adapter of popular ballads.

19. From any current "yellow" journal clip an account of the crimes, confession, and execution of some criminal. Paste this on a sheet and submit it with either a comment on the qualities which would make it good material for a broadside ballad writer, or a broadside ballad of your own composition in imitation of *A Warning for All Desperate Women.*

20. Follow the plan suggested under the preceding topic for a study of the elements of a broadside ballad dealing with an unusual occurrence as these elements appear in a current "yellow" journal.

21. Read Masefield's *The Hounds of Hell.* With this and Southey's *Inchcape Rock* as a basis, write an essay on the ballad of art dealing with the supernatural and terrifying.

22. Read Masefield's *Cap on Head,* and Yeats's *The Land of Heart's Desire.* With these as a basis write an essay on "The fairy child in folklore and ballad."

23. From an examination of popular ballads and popular newspapers what kinds of narrative would you say have generally interested the average man?

24. Compare the vulgar attitude toward criminals revealed in such broadside ballads as *A Warning for All Desperate Women* and the analytical attitude which appears in Amy Lowell's *Number 3 on the Docket,* Tennyson's *Rizpah,* and other modern stories of criminals.

IV. MODERN NARRATIVE POETRY

1. By contrast either with preceding types of narrative poetry or with contemporary lyric poetry trace the tendency of modern narrative poetry to broaden its scope and abandon its purely narrative character.

2. Study the broadening of the field of modern narrative poetry as it appears in the work of any one poet since 1800.

3. In the chapter devoted to lyric poetry, study the use of the narrative element in any one poet or group of poets.

4. In early narrative poetry the heroic element predominated. Has it decreased in modern narrative poetry, or has it changed its method of expression because of different social conditions?

5. Compare the treatment of a heroic theme in such ballads as *The Hunting of the Cheviot* and *Johnie Armstrong* with the modern narrative poem *Lepanto.*

6. What has been the effect upon modern narrative poetry of introducing the personality of the

poet? Illustrate from the work of one or more poets since 1800.

7. Contrast *Tam O'Shanter* as a humorous narrative poem with *Fra Lippo Lippi* or with the *Satires of Circumstance*.

8. Of the poems included in the chapter on Modern Narrative Poetry name the one which most nearly fulfills Stevenson's idea of romance as expressed in *A Gossip on Romance*.

9. Contrast the narrative method and ideals employed in *Atalanta's Race* with those of either *The Eve of Saint Agnes* or *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

10. What contributions did Browning make to the development of modern narrative poetry, judged by the poems included in this chapter?

11. With Coleridge's criticism of Wordsworth's *Preface* to the *Lyrical Ballads* as a basis, analyze Coleridge's theory of poetry as exemplified in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* or *Christabel*.

12. Was the revival of medieval romance in such modern narrative poems as Keats's *The Eve of Saint Agnes* and Coleridge's *Christabel* faithful to the spirit of the Middle Ages as interpreted in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and Malory's *Morte Darthur?* If not, what has been added?

13. Study the nature of the revival of medievalism in the poems of Coleridge and Keats.

14. What was Browning's interpretation of the spirit of the Renaissance, as revealed by the poems in this chapter?

15. What manifestations of realism or social revolt are there in the narrative poems of Hardy, Masters, and Amy Lowell?

16. Compare Kipling's *The Mary Gloucester* (in *Seven Seas*) and Browning's *The Bishop Orders His Tomb at St. Praxed's Church* as deathbed autobiographies.

17. Trace the development and use of the narrative monologue in Burns, Coleridge, Browning, Masters, and Amy Lowell.

18. Feminine psychology in confessional monologues: *Rizpah*, *The Laboratory*, *Pauline Barrett*, *Lucinda Matlock*, *Patterns*, *Number 3 on the Docket*.

19. The use of nature as a background for the development of plot and character in any two poems included in this chapter.

20. Compare the use of irony in *The River* and in *Satires of Circumstance*.

21. How has Noyes transformed the tradition of the outlaw in *The Highwayman?*

22. Compare the method of character description employed by Chaucer in *The Prologue* to the *Canterbury Tales* with that of Masters in *Spoon River Anthology*.

23. How is "the fatal beauty" employed as a device in such poetic narratives as *Deirdre*, *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, *Christabel*, *Atalanta's Race*, and *Andrea del Sarto?*

24. Study Crabbe's *The Village* as an example of late eighteenth-century realism, and compare it with Goldsmith's *The Deserted Village*.

25. In *The Village* Crabbe revolted against the false idealization of rural life. Compare his method and purpose with those of E. L. Masters in *Spoon River Anthology*, and Sinclair Lewis in *Main Street* and *Babbitt*.

26. Read and report on the fitness and handling of the subject of any of the longer narrative poems enumerated in the bibliography.

27. Contrast the use made of narrative headlinks by Chaucer in *The Canterbury Tales*, and Morris in *The Earthly Paradise*.

28. Compare Fra Lippo Lippi's doctrine of art with that of Andrea del Sarto.

29. Apply to poetry Fra Lippo's views on art, lines 217 ff.:

> If you get simple beauty and naught else,
> You get about the best thing God invents.

30. "Mrs. Barbauld once told me, said Coleridge, that she admired the *Ancient Mariner* very much, but that there were two faults in it—it was improbable, and had no moral. As for the probability, I owned that that might admit some question; but as to the want of a moral, I told her that in my own judgment the poem had too much and that the only, or chief fault, if I might say so, was the obtrusion of the moral sentiment so openly on the reader as a principle or cause of action in a work of such pure imagination." Give your opinion on this subject, and apply Coleridge's ideas to any of the narrative poems in this section.

V. THE LYRIC

1. What are the elements of a great lyrical poem? Select three lyrics that you would be willing to defend as great—then present your defense of them.

2. The changing conventions of love poetry. Contrast medieval and Renaissance elaboration of thought and diction with nineteenth-century directness of thought and diction.

3. In his *Preface* to the *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth said that "poetry is the image of man and nature." Discuss this statement and apply it to some of the poems of this chapter.

4. Trace in the British Reviews (especially the *Edinburgh Review* and the *Quarterly Review*) the change in critical attitude toward one of the following poets: Wordsworth, Coleridge, Scott,

Keats, Shelley, Byron, Tennyson, Browning, Rossetti, and Swinburne.

5. Trace the attitude and treatment in lyric poetry of either the restless lover, the disappointed lover, the philosophic lover, or the cynical lover.

6. A sixteenth-century lyric begins "Crabbed age and youth cannot live together." What has lyric poetry to say on this theme?

7. Shakespeare wrote in a lyric, "Youth's a stuff will not endure." What advice have lyric poets given to youth on enjoying this period of life?

8. Discuss the pictures of spirituelle medieval girls given by such nineteenth-century poets as Coleridge in *Christabel*, Tennyson in *The Lady of Shalott* and *Maud*, Rossetti in *The Blessed Damozel*, and Poe in *Helen* and *The Raven*.

9. Discuss the rise of the type of the out-of-door girl in lyric poetry, especially in *The Nutbrowne Maide*, Burns, Wordsworth, Scott, and Meredith.

10. Describe the conflict in lyric poetry of the out-of-door girl type with that of the spirituelle medieval, or Victorian and crinoline periods.

11. How does the treatment of the heroic in lyric poetry differ from its treatment in narrative poetry?

12. Contrast the attitude of the lyric poet toward a genuine girl with his attitude toward the ideal beloved, as in Rossetti's *The Blessed Damozel* or in Browning's *Dedication* to *The Ring and the Book*.

13. The attitude toward patriotism in English or American lyric poetry.

14. The attitude toward freedom in English or American lyric poetry.

15. Contrast the intimately personal lyric poetry of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with that of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, either in English or American poetry.

16. Contrast the attitude toward beauty of two of the following poets: Spenser, Keats, Shelley, Tennyson, and Swinburne.

17. Contrast the English and American patriotic poems of the World War with the patriotic poems that preceded them.

18. Analyze the characteristics of English or American lyric poetry since the war.

19. The earthly paradise in lyric poetry. Contrast Tennyson's *The Lotos-Eaters* and Swinburne's *The Garden of Proserpine* with Stevenson's *In the Highlands*, Yeats's *The Lake Isle of Innisfree*, and Symons's *The Wanderers*.

20. The philosophy of growing old as expressed by Tennyson in *Ulysses* and by Browning in *Rabbi Ben Ezra*.

21. The philosophy of hedonism in life as expressed in the lyric poetry of Swinburne and in Fitzgerald's translation of Omar Khayyám.

22. Lyric poets frequently desired to be transformed into other beings or spirits. Trace this conception in the work of Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats.

23. The search for ideal beauty in lyric poetry. Study with this in mind the poetry of either Shelley or Keats.

24. The use of natural description in one of the following lyric poets: Blake, Burns, and Wordsworth.

25. Compare the attitude toward nature of two of the following poets: Blake, Burns, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Scott, Keats, and Shelley.

26. The influence of the town and industry upon English or American poetry since 1800.

27. What beliefs did the formal and reflective lyric poetry in the eighteenth century express?

28. Contrast the feeling for nature in English and American poetry.

29. The influence of the sea upon English and American lyric poetry, both as a source of poetic imagery and as a symbol of life.

30. Discuss the growth of homely realism and the idealization of the commonplace in modern lyric poetry.

31. Compare the pantheism of Wordsworth with that of Edna St. Vincent Millay, Louis Untermeyer, and Cale Young Rice.

32. Contrast the poetic use of the skylark and the nightingale in English lyric poetry with the use of the thrush and the mocking-bird in American lyric poetry.

33. Select from several nature poems examples of good and of false observation, and list them as Ruskin did in his essay *On the Pathetic Fallacy*.

34. Compare the descriptions of nature in Milton and Wordsworth.

35. Compare Wordsworth's view of nature with that of Whitman.

36. Compare the feeling for nature of Whittier or Frost with that of Whitman.

37. Personifications of nature in the English and American poets.

38. Contrast the Celtic feeling for nature in lyric poetry since 1800 with that of the English.

39. Compare the attitude of Wordsworth and Burns toward the simple country life with that of such American poets as Whittier, Whitman, and Frost.

40. What is the general English attitude toward one of the following subjects: death, the struggle of mankind for existence, and immortality?

41. The influence of Whitman upon American poetry.

42. The development of songs of labor and revolt in English and American lyric poetry.

43. The appearance of the city in lyric poetry.

44. The idealization of the country by lyric poets who write in the city.

45. Contrast the individual beliefs of Fitzgerald and Swinburne as to the transitoriness of life with the general belief expressed by Tennyson in *In Memoriam* and Kipling in *Recessional.*

46. Where has departed beauty gone? What is the answer to this question of the lyric poets?

47. Discuss the poets' memories of youth and departed friends, especially those of Vaughan, Lamb, Hood, Longfellow, and Stevenson.

48. Trace the revolt of the soul against the universe in such poems as Herbert's *The Collar*, Newman's *Lead, Kindly Light*, Arnold's *The Buried Life*, Thompson's *The Hound of Heaven*, Anderson's *The Breaking*, and Untermeyer's *Reveille.*

49. Contrast the note of rebellion and resignation in poems contemplating death.

50. Skepticism and the search for a firm basis of faith in lyric poetry since 1800, as revealed in the work of Tennyson, Browning, Clough, Henley, Whitman, Moody, and Untermeyer.

51. The ethical and didactic note of the New England poets of the nineteenth century.

52. Despair and dejection in lyric poetry as revealed in the poems of Cowper, Shelley, Mangan, Poe, and Thompson.

53. The lyric poet faces death. How does it look to him?

54. The question of a future life and immortality as it has appeared to any one of the lyric poets.

55. Study the development of the elegy in content and form, as revealed in Milton, Gray, Shelley, Tennyson, and Arnold.

56. Employ De Quincey's division of literature in his essay on *Literature of Knowledge and Literature of Power* to determine what lyric poetry, if any, belongs to the first group.

57. Test Poe's theory of poetry as expressed in *The Philosophy of Composition*, by applying his principles to several lyric poems.

58. What are the lyrical elements in Addison's *The Vision of Mirza*, Lamb's *Dream-Children*, and De Quincey's *On the Fear of Death?* Explain with illustrations the distinction between lyrical poetry and lyrical prose.

59. Compare as to content, purpose, and form any English elegy with Whitman's *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed.*

60. Apply to his own poems Wordsworth's poetic theories, as expressed in the *Preface* to the *Lyrical Ballads.*

61. Apply Wordsworth's poetic theories to the poems in free verse in this volume.

62. Has poetry accompanied science as Wordsworth predicted it would?

63. A study of the growth of free verse from *Christabel* to T. S. Eliot.

64. Study the tributes of one poet to another: Jonson to Shakespeare, Herrick to Jonson, Milton to King, Wordsworth to Burns, Keats to Jonson, Shelley to Keats, Browning to Shelley, and Swinburne to Shelley.

65. Study the development in lyric poetry of the elegy for the dead soldier.

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(Titles of selections and names of authors appear in CAPITALS; first lines, in capitals and lower case; and topics discussed, in italics.)

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Ye Mariners of England, 475
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CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE FOR *IDEAS AND FORMS*

This table will serve as a convenient reference for locating an individual writer in his relation to other writers of the same period, irrespective of the forms in which his ideas were expressed. In the table the author's name is given first. Then come his dates, the major type in which he wrote, and, finally, the page of "Ideas and Forms" on which selections from his works appear. The Roman numeral I before a page number refers to Volume I, and the numeral II to Volume II. Anonymous selections in the book are listed in italic at their appropriate place in the table.

English Literature

Old English (Anglo-Saxon)

Before 1100. Heathen poetry dealing with travels, adventures at sea, lyrical laments, and early battles. Christian poetry dealing mainly with biblical themes and saints' legends. Leading dialects were Northumbrian, Mercian, and West Saxon; this last gained the literary supremacy under Alfred the Great, King of Wessex, 871–901.

Beowulf	7th Century	Popular Epic	I-11
Deirdre	7th Century	Popular Epic	I-52
Anglo-Saxon Chronicle	8th Century	History	II-284

Middle English

From 1100–1500. Mixture of Anglo-Saxon and Norman-French languages. The East Midland—the language of Chaucer and of London—was the leading dialect. The period of romances, *fabliaux*, saints' legends, homilies, *exempla*, "dream allegories," ballads, and religious and popular lyrics. Printing first done in England by Caxton in 1476.

Ballads	13th-16th Century	Popular Ballad	I-203
Alisoun	c. 1300	Lyric	I-343
Ubi Sunt Qui Ante Nos Fuerunt?	c. 1350	Lyric	I-344
John Barbour	1316-1395	Lyric	I-348
Geoffrey Chaucer	1340-1400	Medieval Tale	I-150
Sir Gawain	c. 1375	Medieval Romance	I-115
Sir Thomas Malory	1400-1471	Medieval Romance	I-141
The Nutbrowne Maide	c. 1500	Lyric	I-344

Modern English

From 1500 to present. *Early Tudor*—1485–1558. Influence of Greek, Roman, and Italian cultures. Period of the Reformation in England. Transition period in the drama, lyric, and other literary forms. Literature largely in the hands of scholars and courtiers.

Sir Thomas Wyatt	1503?-1542	Lyric	I-351
Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey	1517?-1547	Lyric	I-351
Thomas Campion	1540-1619	Lyric	I-370
As Ye Came from the Holy Land	c. 1550	Lyric	I-348
The New Jerusalem	c. 1550	Lyric	I-350
Gammer Gurtons Nedle	1553	Drama	II-18

Elizabethan Age—1558–1642. The Golden Age of English literature, with a brilliant development of the drama, essay, lyric, and other types in a wide diversity of form and content.

Sir Edward Dyer	c. 1550-1607	Lyric	I-351
Edmund Spenser	1552-1599	Lyric	I-354
Sir Walter Raleigh	c. 1552-1618	Lyric, History	I-361, II-288
Richard Hakluyt	1553-1616	History	II-285
Sir Philip Sidney	1554-1586	Lyric	I-352
John Lyly	1554?-1606	Lyric	I-352
George Peele	c. 1558 - c. 1597	Lyric	I-357
Robert Greene	1560?-1592	Lyric	I-358
Francis Bacon	1561-1626	Essay	II-415
Michael Drayton	1563-1631	Lyric	I-360
Christopher Marlowe	1564-1593	Lyric	I-361
William Shakespeare	1564-1616	Lyric	I-363
Thomas Nash	1567-1601	Lyric	I-369
Sir Henry Wotton	1568-1639	Lyric	I-371
Sir John Davies	1569-1626	Lyric	I-373

John Donne	1573-1631	Lyric	I-377
Ben Jonson	1573-1637	Lyric	I-373
Thomas Dekker	c. 1575 - c. 1641	Lyric	I-372
Thomas Heywood	c. 1575 - c. 1650	Lyric	I-376
John Fletcher	1579-1625	Lyric	I-375
There Is a Lady Sweet and Kind	c. 1580	Lyric	I-349
Love Me Not	c. 1580	Lyric	I-349
Icarus	c. 1580	Lyric	I-349
John Webster	c. 1580 - c. 1630	Lyric, Drama	I-376, II-53
Sir John Beaumont	1583-1627	Lyric	I-375
Francis Beaumont	c. 1584-1616	Lyric	I-376
William Browne	c. 1588 - c. 1643	Lyric	I-380

Cavalier and Puritan—1642–1660. Period of the Commonwealth and Protectorate. Reflective prose, controversial pamphlets, "pagan" lyrics, and religious poems.

George Wither	1588-1667	Lyric	I-402
Robert Herrick	1591-1674	Lyric	I-381
Francis Quarles	1592-1644	Lyric	I-376
George Herbert	1593-1633	Lyric	I-385
James Shirley	1596-1666	Lyric	I-380
Thomas Carew	c. 1598 - c. 1639	Lyric	I-381
Sir William Davenant	1606-1668	Lyric	I-380
Edmund Waller	1606-1687	Lyric	I-408
John Milton	1608-1674	Lyric, Literary Epic	I-72, I-390
Sir John Suckling	1609-1642	Lyric	I-387
Richard Crashaw	c. 1613-1649	Lyric	I-388
Richard Lovelace	1618-1658	Lyric	I-388
Abraham Cowley	1618-1667	Lyric	I-407
Andrew Marvell	1621-1678	Lyric	I-403
Henry Vaughan	c. 1621-1695	Lyric	I-404

Restoration Period—1660–1700. Period of artificiality, license, and satire. Development of the "comedy of manners," heroic tragedy, neo-classical literary criticism, and religious and political satire.

John Dryden	1631-1700	Lyric	I-408
Samuel Pepys	1633-1703	Autobiography	II-359

Age of Pope—1700–1750. Continuation of satire of preceding period. Predominant interest in literary form. Beginnings of journalism, of moral essays, and of interest in nature and democracy.

Sir Richard Steele	1671-1729	Essay	II-420
Joseph Addison	1672-1719	Lyric, Essay	I-412, II-422
Isaac Watts	1674-1748	Lyric	I-414
Alexander Pope	1688-1744	Lyric	I-412
Henry Carey	c. 1693-1743	Lyric	I-413
James Thomson	1700-1748	Lyric	I-415
Henry Fielding	1707-1754	Essay	II-427
Charles Wesley	1707-1788	Lyric	I-431

Georgian Age—1750-1798. Rise of the novel and development of sentimentalism in drama and poetry. Reaction against neo-classicism of preceding age. Beginnings of the Romantic Movement.

Thomas Gray	1716-1771	Lyric	I-416
William Collins	1721-1759	Lyric	I-423
Oliver Goldsmith	1728-1774	Lyric, Essay	I-431, II-430
William Cowper	1731-1800	Lyric, Narrative Poetry	I-251, I-426
Edward Gibbon	1737-1794	History	II-296
James Boswell	1740-1795	Biography	II-370
Richard Brinsley Sheridan	1751-1816	Drama	II-111
William Blake	1757-1827	Lyric	I-432
Robert Burns	1759-1796	Literary Ballad, Lyric Narrative Poetry	I-235, I-254, I-438
Carolina Oliphant, Lady Nairne	1766-1845	Lyric	I-451

Romantic Movement—1798–1837. Period of individualism and expression of personality in essay and lyric. Interest in nature, medieval and Elizabethan literature, romance, and social problems.

William Wordsworth	1770-1850	Literary Ballad, Narrative Poetry, Lyric, Essay	I-237, I-452, II-434
Sir Walter Scott	1771-1832	Literary Ballad, Narrative Poetry, Lyric	I-239, I-257, I-472

Samuel Taylor Coleridge	1772-1834	Narrative Poetry, Lyric	I-175, I-261, I-470, II-434n.
Robert Southey	1774-1843	Literary Ballad	I-238
Charles Lamb	1775-1834	Lyric, Essay	I-471, II-447
Walter Savage Landor	1775-1864	Lyric	I-480
Thomas Campbell	1777-1844	Lyric	I-475
William Hazlitt	1778-1830	Essay	II-457
Thomas Moore	1779-1852	Lyric	I-479
Leigh Hunt	1784-1859	Lyric	I-480
Thomas De Quincey	1785-1859	Essay	II-476
George Gordon, Lord Byron	1788-1824	Lyric	I-481
Charles Wolfe	1791-1823	Lyric	I-479
Percy Bysshe Shelley	1792-1822	Lyric	I-484
Edward J. Trelawny	1792-1881	Biography	II-377
John Keats	1795-1821	Narrative Poetry, Lyric	I-183, I-504

Victorian Age—1837–1901. Period of transition. Wide variety of literary forms and tendency to fuse types. Interest in moral and social problems, industrialism, relationship of science and religion, and education for democracy. Realistic and problem novels, "thoughtful" lyrics, solid essays, and heavy drama.

Thomas Carlyle	1795-1881	History, Essay	II-307, II-494
Thomas Hood	1799-1845	Literary Ballad, Lyric	I-243, I-476
Thomas Babington Macaulay	1800-1859	History, Essay	II-311, II-484
John Henry, Cardinal Newman	1801-1890	Lyric, Essay	I-585, II-504
Gerald Griffin	1803-1840	Lyric	I-514
James C. Mangan	1803-1849	Lyric	I-513
Francis Mahony	1804?-1866	Lyric	I-514
Elizabeth Barrett Browning	1806-1861	Lyric	I-518
Edward Fitzgerald	1809-1883	Lyric	I-515
Alfred, Lord Tennyson	1809-1892	Narrative Poetry, Lyric	I-191, I-311, I-521
William M. Thackeray	1811-1863	Essay	II-531
Robert Browning	1812-1889	Narrative Poetry, Lyric	I-290, I-548
Arthur Hugh Clough	1819-1861	Lyric	I-570
George Eliot	1819-1880	Lyric	I-520
Charles Kingsley	1819-1875	Literary Ballad	I-242
John Ruskin	1819-1900	Essay	II-540
Matthew Arnold	1822-1888	Lyric, Essay	I-576, II-546
William Allingham	1824-1889	Lyric	I-604
Thomas Henry Huxley	1825-1895	Autobiography, Essay	II-390, II-563
Richard D. Blackmore	1825-1900	Lyric	I-590
Dante Gabriel Rossetti	1828-1882	Lyric	I-586
George Meredith	1828-1909	Lyric	I-571
Christina G. Rossetti	1830-1894	Lyric	I-590
William Morris	1834-1896	Narrative Poetry, Lyric	I-274, I-603
John Richard Green	1837-1883	History	II-322
Algernon Charles Swinburne	1837-1909	Lyric	I-593
Walter Pater	1839-1894	Essay	II-565
Thomas Hardy	1840-1928	Narrative Poetry, Lyric	I-326, I-613
Austin Dobson	1840-1921	Lyric	I-590
Robert Bridges	1844-1930	Lyric	I-604
Arthur O'Shaughnessy	1844-1881	Lyric	I-569
William Ernest Henley	1849-1903	Lyric	I-599
Robert Louis Stevenson	1850-1894	Lyric, Essay, Short Story	I-598, II-570, II-634

Modern Period—1901 to present. Continued tendency to fuse types, and to experiment with forms. Interest in Greek and Roman and in contemporary foreign literatures. Interest in personal and social problems, disbelief in social justice, and disillusionment resulting from the Great War find expression in revolt against false idealisms and presentation of sordid realities.

Lady Augusta Gregory	1852-1932	Drama	I-52, II-251
Arthur Wing Pinero	1855-	Drama	II-162
Alfred Edward Housman	1859-	Lyric	I-617
Francis Thompson	1859-1907	Lyric	I-591
"A. E.," G. W. Russell	1862-	Lyric	I-617
Arthur Morrison	1863-	Short Story	II-659
Sir A. T. Quiller-Couch	1863-	Short Story	II-662
William Wymark Jacobs	1863-	Short Story	II-671
William Butler Yeats	1865-	Lyric, Drama	I-633, II-267

Arthur Symons	1865-	Lyric	I-624
Rudyard Kipling	1865-	Lyric	I-606
Richard Le Gallienne	1866-	Lyric	I-626
Arnold Bennett	1867-1931	Essay	II-590
Stephen Leacock	1869-	Essay	II-585
Hilaire Belloc	1870-	Essay	II-593
John M. Synge	1871-1909	Drama	II-243
John McCrae	1872-1918	Lyric	I-617
Walter de la Mare	1873-	Lyric	I-628
Gilbert K. Chesterton	1874-	Narrative Poetry, Essay	I-323, II-588
John Masefield	1874-	Narrative Poetry, Lyric	I-315, I-623
Wilfrid Wilson Gibson	1878-	Lyric	I-622
Lytton Strachey	1880-1932	Biography	II-396
Alfred Noyes	1880-	Narrative Poetry, Lyric	I-313, I-629
A. A. Milne	1882-	Drama	II-205
Siegfried Sassoon	1886-	Lyric	I-614
Rupert Brooke	1887-1915	Lyric	I-620
Katherine Mansfield	1889-1923	Short Story	II-685
"Moira O'Neill"	1900-	Lyric	I-629

American Literature

Colonial Period—1607–1776. Mainly accounts of settlements, hymns, religious poems, sermons, diaries, and journals of relatively small literary value. *National Period*—1776 to present. *Nineteenth Century*. Largely imitative of English contemporary models. Moral and didactic poetry, nature poetry, novels, essays, and short stories. Literature developed first in New England, then in South, Middle-West, and Far West. *Modern Period*. Greater independence, originality, and variety. All types employed and practically all parts of country productive.

Mrs. Mary Rowlandson	wrote 1682	Autobiography	II-349
William Cullen Bryant	1794-1878	Lyric	I-634
Ralph Waldo Emerson	1803-1882	Lyric, Essay	I-653, II-516
Nathaniel Hawthorne	1804-1864	Short Story	II-617
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow	1807-1882	Literary Ballad, Lyric	I-241, I-637
John Greenleaf Whittier	1807-1892	Lyric	I-644
Edgar Allan Poe	1809-1849	Lyric, Essay, Short Story	I-648, II-509, II-613
Oliver Wendell Holmes	1809-1894	Literary Ballad, Lyric	I-244, I-642
Henry David Thoreau	1817-1862	Essay	II-524
James Russell Lowell	1819-1891	Lyric	I-647
Walt Whitman	1819-1892	Lyric	I-657
Francis Parkman	1823-1893	History	II-331
Henry Timrod	1828-1867	Lyric	I-654
Paul Hamilton Hayne	1830-1886	Lyric	I-655
Joaquin Miller	1841-1913	Lyric	I-673
Sidney Lanier	1842-1881	Lyric	I-674
Eugene Field	1850-1895	Lyric	I-677
Edwin Markham	1852-	Lyric	I-677
Samuel McChord Crothers	1857-1927	Essay	II-598
O. Henry	1862-1910	Short Story	II-650
Margaret Steele Anderson	1867-1921	Lyric	I-705
Edgar Lee Masters	1868-	Narrative Poetry	I-328
Edwin Arlington Robinson	1869-	Lyric	I-683
William Vaughn Moody	1869-1910	Lyric	I-679
Thomas Augustine Daly	1871-	Lyric	I-685
Cale Young Rice	1872-	Lyric	I-703
Amy Lowell	1874-1925	Narrative Poetry	I-330
Robert Frost	1875-	Lyric	I-687
H. G. Dwight	1875-	Short Story	II-675
Myra Kelly	1876-1910	Short Story	II-645
Carl Sandburg	1878-	Lyric	I-708
Vachel Lindsay	1879-1932	Lyric	I-690
Anna Hempstead Branch	?	Lyric	I-695
Thomas S. Jones, Jr.	1882-1932	Lyric	I-706
Sara Teasdale	1884-1933	Lyric	I-692
Louis Untermeyer	1885-	Lyric	I-697
John Gould Fletcher	1886-	Lyric	I-712
William Rose Benét	1886-	Lyric	I-706
Chester Firkins	1882-1915	Lyric	I-691
Alan Seeger	1888-1916	Lyric	I-692
Edna St. Vincent Millay	1892-	Lyric	I-694